

2017

# Advancing Quality & Leadership in Digital Education



## 2017 Annual Report



ONLINE LEARNING™  
CONSORTIUM

## A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT AND OUR CEO



Marie Cini, Ph.D.,  
2016 & 2017 OLC  
Board President,  
Provost Emeritus,  
University of Maryland  
University College

Since the early 1990s, we have been devoted to driving quality digital and online learning by advancing best practice guidance and accelerating learning innovation for academic leaders, educators, administrators, designers, and organizations around the world. This year was an exciting time in OLC's history as the community grew, the conversations deepened, and our collective learning process strengthened.

As we reflect back on 2017, we remained focused on the topics of the day, from open educational resources to unbundling of credentials. We also worked hard to help one another.

### SUPPORTING EDUCATORS EVERYWHERE

In 2017, a number of institutions struggled to navigate through incredible natural disasters. We engaged in an institutional outreach campaign to better understand the needs of impacted institutions and then tapped into the incredible talent within the OLC community to create a group that was prepared to support institutions in need.

OLC joined AmazonSmile, a website operated by Amazon that donates a small percentage of eligible purchases to charitable organizations like OLC. We plan to use the funds received to provide development opportunities for professionals employed by institutions whose mission (in part) is to support students from under-served populations.

Additionally, OLC launched the OLC Research Center for Digital Learning and Leadership, embraced conference newcomers, expanded our quality agenda, grew our partnership network to address a range of priorities, like changing institutional practice and policy nationwide, and bringing inclusion to education for all.



Kathleen Ives, D.M.,  
OLC Chief Executive  
Officer and  
Executive Director



## Digital Learning is Here to Stay

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# VISION, MISSION & GOALS

## Our Vision

Setting the global standard in online learning.

## Our Mission

Creating community and connections around quality digital learning while driving innovation.

## Our Goals

- Prepare higher education leadership to successfully navigate the complex and dynamic landscape of digital learning.
- Be recognized as the leader in providing professional development to help member institutions and practitioners achieve higher levels of student learning and success outcomes.
- Become the go-to resource for delivering leading research and expert insight of digital learning trends, innovations, and effective practices.
- Increase the visibility, voice, and value of OLC to our members, partners, sponsors, and those vested in digital learning.
- Build the organizational capacity and structure to meet the current and future demands of OLC.



# Membership



**As a member-sustained organization, OLC is committed to ensuring our members' online learning success.** Membership with OLC means being part of a global community of digital learning enthusiasts and practitioners.

Membership provides great benefits and privileges, including consulting services, exclusive research, peer-networking, and special rates for our conferences, workshops and courses.

In addition, our institutional and corporate members receive complementary access to supplemental materials to support our globally recognized Quality Scorecard.

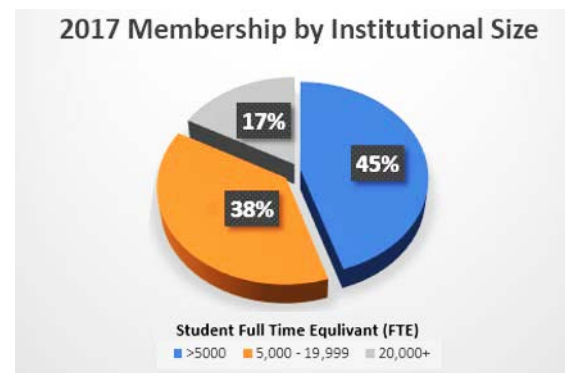
## NEW PRICING STRUCTURE

In 2017, for the first time in over 10 years, we increased our membership prices. In doing so, we made membership more equitable by adjusting the pricing structure so that smaller institutions would pay less than larger ones.

We also expanded discounts to a wider group of institutions serving special populations. In addition, we made it possible for everyone within an institution to enjoy OLC's member benefits.

## MEMBERSHIP BY THE NUMBERS

OLC supported approximately 600 institutional members, more than 325 individual professional members\*, and tens of thousands of community members in 2017



\*In addition, professionals at institutions, as of 2017, are covered under their institutions' membership.

**"With top quality customer support, OLC is the go-to place for training, publications, and expert connections in the field of online higher education."**



Shanna Coles,  
Senior Program Manager,  
Distance Ed,  
University of North Carolina  
at Charlotte



# Conferences & Events

Our conferences and events continue to provide premium opportunities – both face-to-face and virtually – to network, discover and share views on digital learning, emerging technologies, and best practices for blended learning.

In 2017, we hosted thousands of faculty, system administrators, course designers and interested professionals at our two major conferences: OLC Innovate and OLC Accelerate. We rounded out our conference calendar with five regional OLC Collaborate events at academic partner sites across the country.

## OLC INNOVATE

We experienced a 14% increase in onsite attendees, a 3% increase in virtual registrations, and a 17% increase in sponsorship sales in 2017, compared with the previous year.

## OLC ACCELERATE

In 2017, we experienced a slight decline in onsite attendance (2%) and virtual registrations (5%), while sponsorship sales increased slightly by 2%.

## OLC COLLABORATES

Our OLC Collaborate events have provided a great avenue for regionally-affiliated online learning professionals, educators and administrators to collaborate on solving the challenges we all face in digital higher education today. In 2017, we hosted OLC Collaborate events with the following academic partners:

- The California State University
- Montclair State University
- University of Nebraska Online Worldwide
- University of Alaska Anchorage
- The University of Arizona

"The true value of attending the OLC Collaborate event were the networking opportunities. I met other faculty that are wrestling with similar topics."

*OLC Collaborate Nebraska Attendee*



# Professional Development

In 2017, the OLC Institute for Professional Development spearheaded a variety of successful professional development initiatives, including:

- Convening the first member-based Institute Advisory Council
- Enrolling more than 125 participants in the Online Teaching Certificate Program and more than 30 in the Advanced Online Teaching Certificate Program
- Facilitating a number of instructor-led and self-paced workshops for more than 2,100 participants
- Issuing 90 badges to Instructional Designer Certificate program participants and more than 300 badges to pre-conference workshop attendees via the Credly digital credential platform
- Launching 7 new instructor-led workshops and 2 new self-paced workshops

## PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

In an effort to enhance offerings, OLC collaborated with a number of groups, including:

- The Tennessee Board of Regents and Drexel University Online to offer a series of five (5) webinars on the topic of immersive reality
- WELEARN, a Chilean organization, to expand OLC's global reach by providing professional development in Spanish-speaking countries
- The State University System of New York (SUNY) to launch the Instructional Designer Certificate Program



**"OLC has always provided top-notch professional development opportunities."**

*Lauri Morrow, Instructional Designer/Consultant, University of North Texas*

# Quality

## Evaluate, Benchmark, and Support Digital Program Success

At OLC, quality is at the forefront of everything we do. In 2017, we expanded our Quality Scorecard efforts with a focus on building credibility and recognition for the Suite of Quality Scorecards and enhancing the interactive scorecard.

### QUALITY SCORECARD SUITE

As the leader in quality digital learning, OLC continues to find new ways to support higher education institutions who are seeking best practices for advancing quality.

OLC offers a robust suite of Quality Scorecards to meet this growing demand which can be used to demonstrate elements of quality within the program, as well as an overall level of quality, to higher education accrediting bodies.

The comprehensive Quality Scorecard Suite provides institutions the necessary criteria and benchmarking tools to ensure digital learning excellence for the entire institution in the following areas:

- Administration of Online Programs
- Blended Learning Programs
- Quality Course Teaching and Instructional Practice
- OSCQR Course Design Review
- Digital Courseware Instructional Practice

## The OLC Quality Scorecard Suite



**Nearly 5,000  
Downloads of  
Quality Scorecards  
in 2017**



**The Quality Scorecard is grounded in research, best practices and expert opinion."**  
*Debbie Thorne, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Texas State University*



# Research



**OLC launched the OLC Research Center for Digital Learning and Leadership in 2017.** The Center includes dozens of curated and original resources, like “Alternative Credentials 2.0,” OLC’s first commissioned qualitative research project. In Q4 2017, the Research Center received nearly 100 inquiries from organizations and institutions interested in collaborating with OLC on research, contributing content to the Research Center, or engaging OLC for a presentation or workshop on digital learning research.

**OLC’s 2017 research-focused initiatives also included:**

- Our perennial sponsorship of the 13th annual report by the Babson Survey Research Group (BSRG) on the state of distance education
- Co-development of the annual Inside Higher Ed Faculty Attitudes on Technology Survey
- Collaborations with Cal Poly, University of Virginia and Oregon State University on research and publishing of white papers, studies (including an instructional designer study) and a webinar
- Production of thought-leadership webinars which generated 250-800 registrations each

**ONLINE LEARNING JOURNAL**

In 2017, Online Learning Journal (OLJ) experienced 40,532 sessions accessed by 27,569 users, of which, 67% were new to the site. In addition, OLJ was included in the Web of Science Core Collection under the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI). Inclusion in this scientific index signals the prestige of journals that are selected, and makes OLJ and its authors more discoverable, leading to more recognition and citation. Also in 2017, we moved hosting of OLJ to the Public Knowledge System (PKP) and made technical improvements.

**BOOKS**

OLC entered into an agreement with Routledge/Taylor & Francis in 2017 to sell books that are of interest to the OLC community. Under the agreement, members receive a 20% discount on books.



**“The OLC Research Center is an essential source of high quality information for those engaged in academic inquiry, practical application of research, and policy making.”**

*Peter Shea, Associate Provost for Online Education, University at Albany, State University of New York*



# Leadership

OLC serves as a catalyst for online and digital learning leadership to connect, learn, and excel. Since its inception in 2006, the Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning (IELOL) has advanced the leadership skills of 350 higher education professionals representing large, midsize and small institutions, including public and private, covering all Carnegie Classifications and more than 12 international programs.

## DEVELOPING EMERGING LEADERS (IELOL)

Now in its eleventh year, IELOL serves the development needs of emerging leaders responsible for a variety of online learning initiatives. Participants connect and network with colleagues from around the world, with graduates joining a growing network of leaders in higher education. In 2017, IELOL produced a record 60 emerging leader graduates.

## THE LEADERSHIP NETWORK

OLC advanced its Leadership Network in 2017, by convening two gatherings of senior leaders in digital learning -- one at OLC Innovate (38 participants) and the other at OLC Accelerate (85 participants). Leaders discussed topics related to digital learning and institutional leadership, participated in small group discussions and engaged in networking activities. Attendees represented various institutional types (e.g., 2-year, 4-year, public, private, HBCUs, etc.). OLC collaborated with Inside Higher Ed to cross-promote and engage sponsors for the event at OLC Accelerate.



**"The IELOL program has greatly enhanced my leadership skills and professional network. I would highly encourage anyone who wishes to grow as a leader to apply. The commitment is definitely worthwhile!"**

*Tony Farrell, Executive Dean, College of Education, Ashford University*

# Awards & Recognition



## DIGITAL LEARNING INNOVATION

Through the continued support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grant, in February 2017, a group of 14 field experts developed a set of criteria to establish excellence in digital courseware implementation and impact, including Innovation, Access, Accessibility, Implementation, Impact, and Sustainability.

The six domains became the foundation of the 2017 Digital Learning Innovation Awards (DLIA) application and scoring rubric. The 2017 award cycle opened in March.

The DLIAwards aim to advance the adoption of digital courseware by recognizing institutions who have improved student success, especially among minority, first generation, and other under-represented student groups. Sixty-one institutions, 32 faculty-led team projects and 29 institution-led projects were successfully submitted for award consideration.

## COLLABORATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

During the year, OLC collaborated with Digital Learning Solution Network partners, New Media Consortium, intentional futures, and APLU in editing courseware related publications including the NMC Scaling Solutions Toolkit, High-Tech High-Touch: Serving Student Needs at Scale, and the forthcoming special issue in Current Issues in Emerging eLearning on Leveraging Adaptive Courseware. In addition, OLC facilitated eight national presentations related to the DLIAward submission criteria.

## A FOCUS ON QUALITY

In 2017, OLC extended the CWIC collaborative work with Tyton Partners in the development of two scorecards related to digital courseware, as follows:

- QCTIP: With 97 indicators, the Quality Course Teaching and Instructional Practice scorecard (QCTIP) was designed to focus on quality pedagogy
- DCIP: A smaller framework, the Digital Courseware Instructional Practice (DCIP), has 20 indicators in 8 categories, including:
  - Course Learning Outcomes
  - Course Content, Assignments
  - Instructor Dependent
  - Class Discussion and Engagement
  - Building Community
  - Communication
  - Continuous Course Improvement.



**2017 DLIAwards:**  
**\$100,000 Institution Category**



**WGU**

### National Louis University:

"NLU's Harrison Professional Pathways Program (Pathways): Transforming Curriculum and Instruction to Ensure Student Success"

### Southern New Hampshire University:

"Enhancing FYE With Integrated Courseware"

### Western Governors University:

"Implementation of a specialized online course to develop undergraduate nursing students' affective skills to enable them as active co-creators of their learning"



# Awards & Recognition

## DIGITAL LEARNING INNOVATION

### \$10,000 Faculty-led Team Awards

*"Bio Beyond: Gateway to Success,"* Oakton Community College

*"Closing the Gap: Personalized Learning and Meaningful in an Online, Undergraduate, Degree Completion Program in Business Administration,"* Quinnipiac University

*"Improving student outcomes in developmental mathematics courses through adaptive learning at Richard Bland College of William & Mary (RBC),"* Richard Bland College of William & Mary

*"OpenStax Tutor at Salt Lake Community College: Transforming Pedagogy Through Courseware,"* Salt Lake Community College

*"Implementation of Blended Pedagogy to Improve Student Learning Outcomes and Retention in a Large Restructured Gateway Anatomy & Physiology Course for Allied Health Majors: a Learner Centric Strategy,"* University of New England

*"Enhancing Student Success in a Bottleneck Engineering Course Using a Flipped Classroom Pedagogy and Adaptive Learning Courseware,"* California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

*"Improving Learning Outcomes for Millennials: Using digital technology to increase assignment completion, understanding of material, and overall success for underprepared students,"* College of the Sequoias

*"Using Adaptive Learning Software to Improve Academic Persistence in First-Generation Community College Students,"* Glendale Community College

*"Increasing undergraduate student success in gateway mathematics through pedagogical innovation: Implementing an Emporium model, mobile integration, flipped strategies and adaptive technology,"* Merrimack College

*"ROAD Math: A path to success,"* Oakton Community College



\$10,000 Faculty-led Team Awards



# Awards & Recognition

## OLC 2017 Effective Practice Award Recipients

*"3-D Virtual Reality Microscope,"* by Shannon Riggs, Oregon State University Ecampus

*"Academic Advising Group Advising Sessions,"* by Dawn Coder, Katie Gaines, Kate Elias, Andrea Woerman, Jeff Hill, Stephanie Vlajic, The Pennsylvania State University, World Campus

*"Affordability Counts,"* by Gus Roque, David-John Palmer, Florida International University

*"Applying a Group Coaching and Mentoring Framework to Shift an Organization Culture,"* by Linda Algozzini, Grady Batchelor, Shannon Voyles, Kim Bessolo and Valencia Gabay, American Public University System

*"Creating a Virtual Community of Practice for Online Adjunct Faculty,"* by Sara Ombres, Angie Atwell, Cristina Cottom and Lisa Martino, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

*"Designing Personalized Online Teaching Professional Development through Self-Assessment,"* by Jason Rhode, Stephanie Richter, Tracy Miller, Northern Illinois University

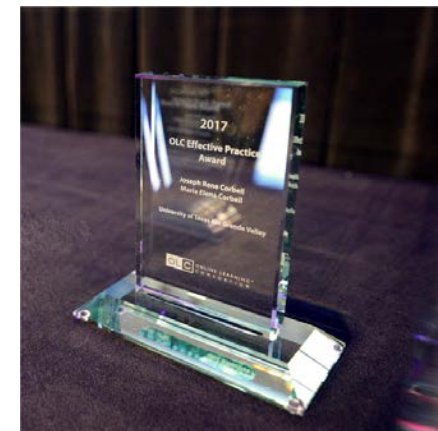
*"Digital Badges: Motivating Learners to Excel While Adding Professional Value to Their College Degrees,"* by Joseph Rene Corbeil and Maria Elena Corbeil, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

*"Digital Mentorship Competency,"* by Martin Mehl and Luanne Foss, Cal Poly

*"Establishing a Learning Community: The Educational Leadership (EDLE) Online Orientation Program,"* by Anne-Marie Balzano, Ying-Ying Kuo and Scott Bauer, George Mason University

*"Facilitating Student Success via Emergency Accessibility,"* by Christine Paige, Nathan Whitley-Grassi, Alena Rodick, Jennifer Nettleton, Shaun Hoppel, Allison Moreland, Antonia Jokelova, Andrea Piazza-Victor, SUNY Empire State College

*"Improving Learning, Engagement and Retention of Nursing Students Studying Fully Online, Using a Virtual Classroom Peer Coaching System,"* by Jackie O'Flaherty, University of South Australia



## OLC 2017 Effective Practice Award Recipients

*"Improving the Online Testing Accommodation Process with Quiz Extensions,"* by John Rabile and Matthew Emond, University of Central Florida

*"Increasing Online Learning Success Using a Learning Analytics Tool with Messaging about How to Study Productively,"* by Diane Reddy, Dylan J. Barth and Raymond Fleming, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

*"Innovation in Virtual Public Speaking: Applications Across Disciplines,"* by Marlene Preston and Brandi Quesenberry, Virginia Tech

*"Learner Supports When and Where They Are Needed,"* by Mindy Sloan, Bridgepoint Education, Ashford University

*"Nudging Students to Success,"* by Colleen Carmean and Jill Frankfort, University of Washington-Tacoma

*"Student Success Center: Supporting Graduate Students in an Online Learning Community,"* by Brian C. Wilson, Christine Yao, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

*"The Doctoral Orientation to the Capstone (DOC): A Virtual Experience for First Year Online Doctoral Students,"* by Laura Lynn and Rebecca Jobe, Walden University

*"Using Digital Badges as a Framework to Support and Scale an Online Teaching and Learning Community,"* by Alexandra Pickett, Open SUNY Center for Online Teaching Excellence

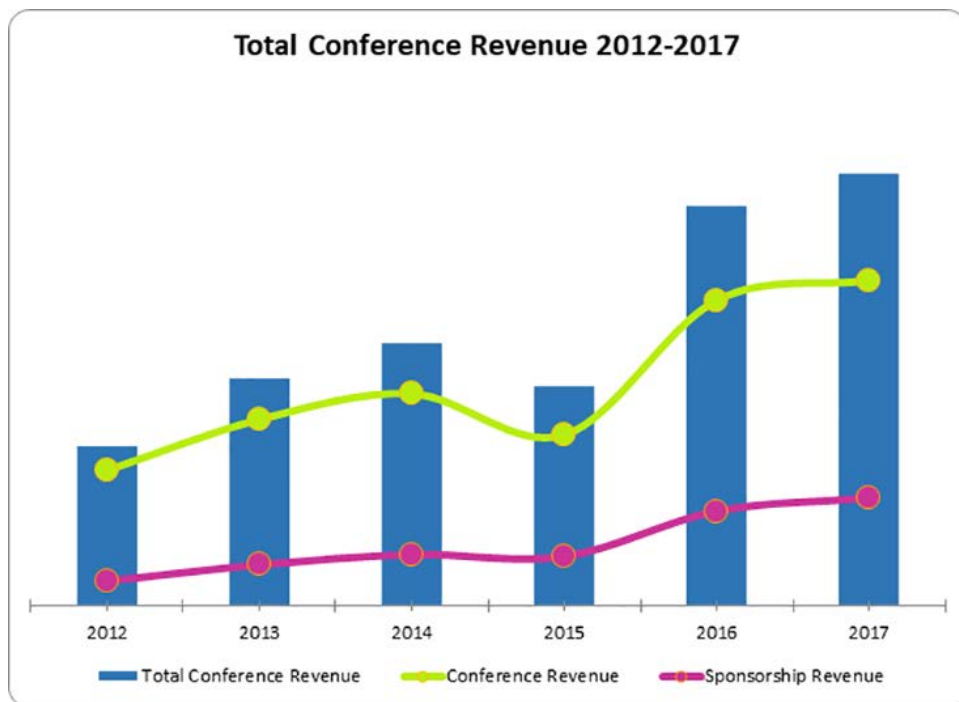


# Financials

## Product Performance

### CONFERENCES

Conferences has seen our largest dollar increase in performance with a 62% jump in revenue in 2017. OLC has been working diligently to maintain our long-standing reputation as a leader within the industry by hosting cutting-edge, well-attended conferences, providing the latest in research findings and courseware development, and enhancing partnerships and sponsorships annually through both personal and professional attention to our community.



### MEMBERSHIP

We also must highlight our continued success in attracting and engaging new member institutions and individuals, as well as our progress in cultivating learners through our continually improving professional development courses and workshops. Membership has experienced a 28% growth, and the Institute has experienced a 20% growth since 2012.

### INNOVATION

Other Income is derived from our innovation category, in which we explore new ideas, methodologies, theories, and other approaches for advancing quality digital teaching. This product line includes the Quality Scorecard and Consulting products, reflecting a 93% increase in revenue with a more minimal dollar growth. Once a product has shown success financially and is recognized within our field, we promote it to a fully-recognized product line. The Quality Scorecard and Consulting Services have met these standards and are established as a standalone product lines beginning in fiscal 2018.

# Financials

## Product Performance

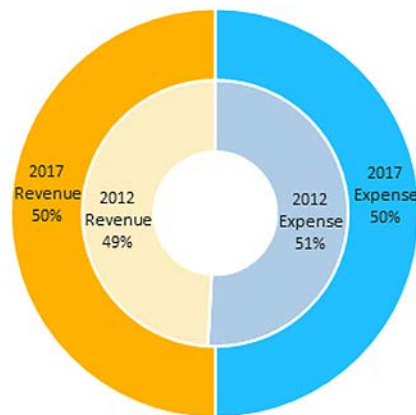
### PERFORMANCE OVER TIME

Online Learning Consortium continues to improve its financial strength over time. Since 2012, revenue has grown by 45%, while expenses have increased by 40%, reflecting a 5% differential. This disparity can be explained, in part, by the Cabinet's focus on synchrony between departments and a better directive and understanding of annual budgets and budget performance.

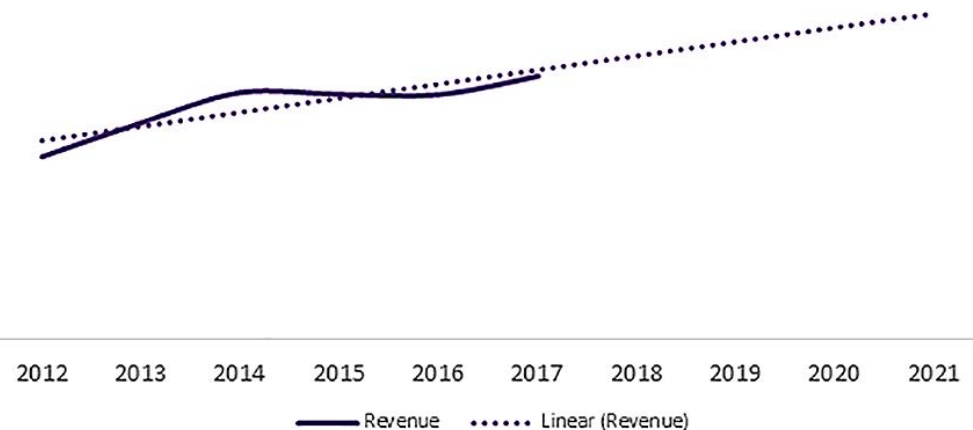
### FORECASTING

According to our growth trend line, which has an 80% fit, we anticipate a growth rate of 5% per year for the next three years, which is consistent with our strong historical growth since 2012. Projections agree with this trend line, with revenue forecasts projecting an increase of 5% - 8% year-over-year.

Growth Over Time



Growth 2012-2017 Trendline - 2021



**Online Learning Consortium continues to improve its financial strength over time.**



# Financials

## 2017 Financial Summary\*

According to our growth trendline, which has an 80% fit, we are expected to grow by 5% each year for the next three years, which is consistent with our strong historical growth since 2012. Projections agree with this trendline, with revenue forecasts coming in at an increase of 5% to 8% year-over-year.

Statement of Financial Position			
Assets		Revenue and Grants	
Cash and Cash Equivalent	\$ 1,659,030	Professional Development	\$ 955,847
Accounts Receivable	\$ 1,001,559	Membership	\$ 864,481
Other Assets	\$ 36,341	Conferences	\$ 2,644,208
		Non-Foundation Grants	\$ 17,027
		Other Activities	\$ 168,009
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 2,696,930</b>		
Liabilities		Total Revenue and Non-Foundation Grant	
Accounts Payable	\$ 170,565		\$ 4,649,572
Unearned Revenue	\$ 416,545	Expenses	
Accrued Expenses	\$ 80,128	Product and Program Development	\$ 2,129,939
		Operations/Overhead	\$ 2,517,934
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 667,238</b>	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 4,647,873</b>
Net Assets			
Unrestricted	\$ 3,305,143		
<b>Total Assets and Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 5,334,835</b>		

Revenue reliability comes directly from our product lines – we have a 77% expected membership renewal rate YOY, with targets to achieve an 8% growth in that category for 2018.

Conference revenue is also a reliable source of income for us, split between our partnered sponsors at 47%, and our return attendees at 30%.

Lastly, due to diligent investment funding, we have 5.0 months of appropriate liquidity in unrestricted cash. This covers all expenses for 5.0 months if we were to receive \$0 in revenue during that timeframe and excludes all external funding.

Though we were net-profitable in 2017, we are working towards more diligent budget management, both in revenue growth and expense management, toward the goal of increasing our ROI year-over-year. It is important to note we are currently a self-sustaining organization. In 2017, our monthly revenue exceeded our monthly expenses by 0.03%, proving self-sustainability while also providing room for growth. Our continued financial health is due to capable employees, experienced leadership, and strong financial management over time.

\*2017 Audit will occur in June of 2018 – these results are pending the completion of the financial audit.



The Online Learning Consortium is the leading professional organization devoted to advancing quality online learning by providing professional development, best practice publications, and guidance to educators, online learning professionals, and organizations around the world.

