PROJECT EVALUATION FORM

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ONLINE DELIVERY FEES

Approximately half of the institutions (34 of 68) and programs (56 of 119) reviewed charge a distinct online delivery or distance learning fee, including the University of Mississippi, which charges a $75 fee per credit hour for online classes. The University of Tennessee-Knoxville offers a typical rationale for the assessment of such fees, which is to support the technology infrastructure required by online programs, as well as the overall maintenance of the distance learning program as a whole.

Overall, the University of Mississippi’s online course fee ranks among the highest in the region, which may contribute to the relatively high cost of the School of Education’s online programs as compared to regional competitors. The average fee for distance students, among the 34 institutions using a separate charge, is $41 per credit hour. Just four institutions charge a higher online delivery fee than Mississippi; by comparison, 20 institutions charge a higher tuition rate for in-state students. Relative to tuition and other program costs, Mississippi’s fee represents 13.9 percent of the total program cost for in-state and out-of-state students, which is above the averages across all institutions and programs charging a separate distance learning fee (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Online Delivery Fee as Share of Total Program Cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Delivery Fee as Share of Total Cost</th>
<th>13.9%</th>
<th>8.8%</th>
<th>6.8%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Mississippi</td>
<td>Average: In-State Students</td>
<td>Average: Out-of-State Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The Distance Education Fee is used to support the technology needed to deliver online courses . . . as well as the creation of new courses and course material for future programs.”

—University of Tennessee

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8 Ibid.
9 See: “Distance Education Course Fees.” University of Tennessee-Knoxville. http://onestop.utk.edu/tuition-fees/
10 As the administration of fees varies by institution, the size and prevalence of online delivery fees must be interpreted with caution. For example, an institution that does not charge such fees might recoup online delivery expenses through a general or technology fee charged to all students. Conversely, many institutions that do charge online delivery fees do not assess fees charged to distance students related to on-campus resources such as the library or student recreation facilities.
Figure 5: Lower-Priced Programs by USNWR Rank

Florida State University
Texas A&M University
University of Arkansas
University of Central Florida
University of Mississippi
University of Alabama
University of Houston
Texas Tech University
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Texas at Arlington
University of North Texas
Georgia Southern University
Stephen F. Austin State University
Albany State University
Angelo State University
Arkansas State University
Arkansas Tech University
Carson-Newman University
Columbus State University
Delta State University
Georgia College
Henderson State University
Jacksonville State University
Kennesaw State University
Lamar University
Northwestern State University
Sam Houston State University
Southern Arkansas University
Texas A&M University-Commerce
University of Alabama at Huntsville
University of Central Arkansas
University of North Alabama
University of South Alabama
University of Southern Mississippi
University of Texas at Tyler
University of West Alabama
University of West Florida
Valdosta State University
West Texas A&M University
Troy University

Not Ranked*

* Includes education schools or programs reported by USNWR as "Unranked" or "Rank Not Published", as well as those that are not recognized by USNWR.
For example, both the University of Houston and the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) charge approximately the same amount as Mississippi for a master’s degree in early childhood or elementary education for in-state residents (approximately $15,000); however, Houston and UAB charge nearly twice that amount to out-of-state residents (Figure 4).

As such, the exceptions to this pattern are the MEd in K-12 Leadership and the MA in Curriculum and Instruction (MACI), which cannot be completed entirely online,\(^5\) and which do not charge a flat rate for residents and non-residents.\(^6\) While in-state rates for these two programs are comparable to the average rate among programs included in the benchmarking, out-of-state rates are considerably higher. The MACI degree, for instance, costs non-resident students more than any other MAT-style alternative certification degree reviewed, while the MEd in K-12 Leadership is more expensive than all but one other option (the University of Tennessee-Knoxville’s MS in Educational Administration).

**Competitive Position**

Compared to the School of Education’s online MEd programs in early childhood and elementary education — the least costly online programs — 40 regional institutions offer an online education master’s degree with a lower total program cost for in-state residents (even fewer offer less expensive degrees for non-residents, given Mississippi’s flat rate). However, most of these programs are found at lower-profile public colleges and universities. Just two of these lower-priced programs are at institutions ranked substantially higher than Mississippi in the *U.S. News & World Report* graduate education school rankings, and most (27) do not factor in the rankings at all.\(^7\)

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5. "K-12 Leadership: Master of Education (MEd)." University of Mississippi. [http://education.olemiss.edu/academics/programs/ed_leadership_med.html](http://education.olemiss.edu/academics/programs/ed_leadership_med.html)

6. "Master of Arts (MA) in Curriculum and Instruction (MACI)." University of Mississippi. [http://education.olemiss.edu/academics/programs/macil.html](http://education.olemiss.edu/academics/programs/macil.html)


**TOTAL PROGRAM COST**

The total program cost for the School of Education’s online programs – based on per credit hour charges and program length – compare relatively well to regional competitors for out-of-state students (Figure 3). However, the cost for Mississippi residents tends to be higher than in-state students pay for online education programs at other institutions in their home states.

For instance, when compared to regional competitors, the School of Education’s master’s programs in early childhood education, elementary education, and higher education all rank at or below the median cost for out-of-state students, but the costs for in-state students are all above regional medians. The MA in Higher Education/Student Personnel, a longer degree at 42 semester hours, is among the most expensive higher education master’s degrees in the region; among public institutions, it is the single most expensive program for in-state students.°

![Figure 3: Percentile Rank by Total Program Cost of Online MEd Programs*](image)

*As ranked against all institutions, public and private.

The difference between the School of Education’s pricing for in-state students versus out-of-state students as compared to competitors points to an advantage of the flat rate for residents and non-residents.° This is a common practice for distance-learning programs: of the 100 programs at public institutions reviewed for this report, 58 do not charge differential tuition. However, enough online programs do charge out-of-state students a higher rate that the University of Mississippi’s flat rate should provide it with some advantage.

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"technology fees" charged by many institutions (which, where applicable, are included in the "Other Fees" category).

- **Other Fees**: Non-tuition charges other than online delivery fees are reported separately only where necessary to tabulate a total cost per credit hour. Where the institution reports tuition and fees in a single figure, this has been used as the "Tuition per Credit Hour" figure.²
- **One-Time Fees**: Fees such as those for application, orientation, or graduation are not factored into total program cost.
- **Student Insurance/Health Services**: Due to of the variability in whether students pay for insurance or health services through the institution, these fees have not been factored into total program cost.

**KEY FINDINGS**

**COST PER CREDIT HOUR**

At $540 per credit hour for both in-state and out-of-state students, the cost of the School of Education’s online master’s degrees ranks well above average for the Southeast region (Figure 2). It is substantially above the average cost per credit hour not only among other public institutions ($439), but also among all institutions, including private universities ($462). The $540 per credit hour rate puts the School of Education in the 80th percentile of all programs reviewed for this report.

![Figure 2: Distribution of Total Cost per Credit Hour Charges*](image)

* In-state students only.

² For example, the University of North Florida reports a single figure – $493.68 per credit hour – for Florida resident graduate tuition and fees. This figure includes fees such as a capital improvement fee or an athletic fee, as well as tuition. However, these fees have not been disaggregated, aside from a $30 per credit hour fee for distance learning (i.e., online delivery). See: “Tuition & Fees.” University of North Florida. [http://www.unf.edu/ tuition/](http://www.unf.edu/tuition/)
TUITION AND FEES BENCHMARKING FOR ONLINE PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

To assist the University of Mississippi School of Education in assessing its competitive position in the regional market for online master's degrees, Hanover Research benchmarked the tuition and fees for online programs in five fields of study at institutions across the Southeast (Figure 1), including both public and private institutions. An accompanying Excel data supplement contains complete tuition and fees information for 119 programs reviewed across 68 institutions. This brief outlines the parameters of the benchmarking review and presents key findings derived from the data, which are also presented in an accompanying PowerPoint presentation.

PARAMETERS

In collecting tuition and fees data, Hanover Research used the following parameters. Unless otherwise noted, data in the accompanying supplement are reported according to these guidelines:

- **Academic Year**: Unless otherwise noted, all tuition and fees are for the 2016-2017 academic year.

- **Credit Hours**: The credit hours shown represent the minimum credit hours required to complete the degree, although in some cases degrees take longer to complete, typically by no more than 3 to 6 credit hours (e.g., to complete a thesis, or to complete missing pre-requisites).\(^1\)

- **Fees Included**: In addition to tuition, mandatory fees charged to online students are factored into total program cost, including any student fees applied to online and on-campus students, where applicable. Additional parameters used for the reporting of fees include:
  - **Online Delivery Fees**: Wherever an institution charges a distinct fee for distance or online delivery, this is reported separately. This does not include general

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\(^1\) For example, if an institution reports that a degree requires 33-36 semester credit hours, the data supplement reports this as a 33 credit hour degree.
TUITION AND FEES BENCHMARKING FOR ONLINE PROGRAMS

Prepared for the University of Mississippi School of Education

October 2016

In the following brief, Hanover Research summarizes the findings from its benchmarking review of tuition and fees for online education master's degrees in the Southeast.
I. Title IX online training
   Information is coming soon about all faculty and staff participating in a mandatory training about Title IX. The group agreed that all should conduct training online rather than having someone from the Title IX office coming to do a face to face training.

II. Diversity plan for faculty and students

III. New SOE Committees – CAEP Standards
   a. Content and Pedagogical Knowledge
   b. Clinical Partnerships and Practice
   c. Candidate Quality, Recruitment and Selectivity
   d. Program Impact (Impact on student learning)
   e. Provider Quality, continuous Improvement, and Capacity (Quality Assurance)

   Items II and III are related. CAEP has five standards as listed above. NCATE required seven standards. Dr. Rock explained that SOE will form committees for items B, C, and E.

IV. TeachLive
   TeachLive is now called Mursion. SOE has purchased license to operate on our own. We will hire two interactors who will work out of Guyton room 122.

V. Searches
   Teacher Education: 3 positions in Tupelo (Elementary and Reading)
   2 positions in DeSoto (Reading)
   1 position in Oxford (Tenure track for Health & PE)
   1 administrative secretary

   LCE: 1 position, currently conducting interviews

VI. Hanover Research Project (see handout)
   Dr. Rock asked members to read the handout and give him feedback. He will submit report to Provost Stocks next week.

VII. Chancellor Vitter’s Investiture: November 10th at 3:00 p.m. at Ford Center
   - Classes scheduled between 2:15 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. are cancelled

   SOE faculty participating in ceremony are asked to line up outside the music building.

VIII. Faculty meeting: November 11th at 10:00 a.m.