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**Patrick and Watson to deliver "Trends in Online Learning" keynote at Michigan Symposium**

Ypsilanti, MI, February 1, 2008 – Susan Patrick, President & CEO of the North American Council for Online Learning (NACOL), and John Watson, founder of Evergreen Consulting and author of the annual *Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning* report, will give the closing keynote address titled, "Current and Future Trends in Online Learning" at Michigan Virtual University's Online Learning Symposium on February 6, 2008. The theme of the conference is: Online Solutions to Everyday Challenges. Michigan is the first state in the nation to have an online learning requirement for high school graduation. Patrick and Watson will discuss national and global trends for the future of education.

"Online learning is increasing access to rigorous, high quality courses across the nation that can help improve high school graduation rates and offer alternatives to meeting the requirements," says Patrick. "Other countries are centering education reform strategies on e-learning to expand access to courses, improve teaching, increase achievement and teach 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Michigan is taking the lead with online learning, and preparing students to be ready for college and work demands." One in five college students takes an online course and more than 30% of workforce training is done online.

"Michigan is among the leading states in implementing online learning solutions in response to the issues faced by K-12 education," says John Watson, who wrote The Michigan Online Learning Report, which was commissioned by the Michigan Virtual University. We hope that this symposium will not only highlight the achievements of online learning in Michigan but also demonstrate the promise that online learning holds for meeting future challenges not only in Michigan, but across the country.

Patrick was named the President and CEO of NACOL in September 2005. She is the former Director of the Office of Educational Technology at the U.S. Department of Education. As Director, she published the National Education Technology Plan, *Toward a New Golden Age in American Education: How the Internet, the Law and Today's Students Are Revolutionizing Expectations* in January 2005. Patrick managed the federal government's educational technology policies and produced two Secretary's Technology Leadership Summits. For Patrick's complete biography, visit [www.nacol.org](http://www.nacol.org).

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**About NACOL**

The North American Council for Online Learning (NACOL), founded in September 2003, is *the* international K-12 non-profit organization representing the interests of administrators, practitioners and students involved in online learning in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and abroad. The association strives to achieve this mission by leading initiatives to conduct research to enhance quality K-12 online learning; encourage collaboration among practitioners in the online learning marketplace; and promote the success and effectiveness of online learning. Visit [www.nacol.org](http://www.nacol.org) for information.

#### **About Evergreen Consulting Associates**

Evergreen Consulting Associates, founded in 2000, is a private consulting and advisory firm headquartered in Evergreen, Colorado that specializes in helping clients in the education, education technology and education publishing industries. Selected clients include Monterey Institute for Technology and Education, Connections Academy, Florida Virtual School, Colorado Department of Education, University of California, Learning Point Associates, Texas Education Agency, Wyoming Department of Education, and Clark County School District. We publish the annual *Keeping Pace with K12 Online Education: A Review of State-Level Policy and Practice* report, the leading source of updated information in the K12 virtual school and online learning industry, as well as reports for specific states and organizations, such as *A National Primer on K12 Online Education* for the North American Council for Online Learning (NACOL), *The State of eLearning in California*, and *The Michigan Online Learning Report*.

#### **About Michigan Virtual University's Online Learning Symposium**

The conference takes place at the Ann Arbor Marriott, Ypsilanti at Eagle Crest on February 6, 2008. Visit [www.mivu.org](http://www.mivu.org) for information.