

“Reaching Out to Educate Illinois”
A White Paper on Distance Education at Illinois State University

Prepared for

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Executive Summary

Background

Higher education has always reached out to students beyond the confines of physical campus locations. Correspondence and extension style programs continue to be popular at many colleges and universities. In recent years technological advances have led to a rapid growth of outreach or “distance” courses and programs. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the technology of interactive television (ITV) or “compressed video” became synonymous with distance learning in higher education institutions across the U.S. More recently, over the last several years distance education has been characterized primarily by Web-based and Internet technologies. This technological trend has reached the point where the term “distance education” now almost always implies some form of “electronic mediation.”

Electronically-mediated distance education enrollments and revenues have become a growth industry in national and state-wide higher education, with such enrollments in the U.S. tripling since 1998 and increasing last year in Illinois by over 100%. Distance education enrollments have likewise been growing at Illinois State, particularly with Internet courses, which saw a 60% increase from FY2000 to FY2001.

Illinois State has a long history of reaching out to state constituents through extension programs and is now experimenting with new “distance” delivery modes. The spirit of Illinois State’s “Educating Illinois” action plan encourages “connections between faculty and students that extend beyond the classroom” and “place students at the center of teaching and research.” This type of “engaged learning” is the optimistic goal among distance education’s most ardent supporters.

The Extended University (EU) and the University Distance Education Steering Committee (UDESC) have been charged with general oversight and facilitation of distance education at Illinois State. A May 2001 University Curriculum Subcommittee, charged by the Provost and chaired by the Executive Director of EU, made recommendations (not yet approved) that addressed distance education issues of pedagogy, quality, approval, institutional notification, administrative support, and accreditation.

Although Illinois State has some mechanisms in place to administer distance education efforts, there has been little institutional strategic guidance or planning. The national and state-wide growth, importance, and inevitability of distance education demands that we acknowledge the role of distance education on campus and more clearly define our strategic aims. This paper is an attempt to contribute to that process.

Guiding Principles

The spirit of the recommendations made here and those contained in the May 2001 University Curriculum Committee Distance Education report (attachment 3) are based on the following principles:

- Although national, regional, and local distance education offerings are rapidly growing, Illinois State will remain primarily a residential campus providing students with “a small-college experience with large-university opportunities.”
- Distance education will provide a means to serve constituents who might not otherwise be able to take advantage of Illinois State’s quality educational offerings.
- Distance education is a natural and positive result of the convergence of faculty interests, emerging technological advancements, and the needs and desires of Illinois citizens.

- Individual departments and colleges can best determine their distance education strategic objectives and audiences; departmental faculty can best determine curriculum and content of distance education courses and programs.
- Illinois State must provide sufficient faculty and student administrative and technical support to ensure successful, effective, and efficient distance education offerings; Illinois State must also ensure appropriate institutional image integrity and adherence to national accreditation guidelines.

Recommendations

Given regional and national trends and the current state of distance education at Illinois State, the following recommendations are made. The University should:

1. Strategically plan for distance education growth and development.
2. Encourage departments/colleges to develop their own distance education strategic niches.
3. Develop campus wide standards, support and infrastructure for distance education.
4. Investigate alternatives to Interactive Television (ITV).
5. Direct student outreach fees to activities and services that relate to the students that pay them.

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Background

The term “distance education” conveys the implication that education is being somehow delivered to students beyond the physical location of the educational institution. For much of the last 150 years most distance education was delivered via the means of correspondence study. Many U.S. universities regularly engaged in educational delivery that involved communication with distant students through the use of the postal system. Indeed, one of the earliest citations of a “distance” education program was a degree offered in 1873 through correspondence with Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois. As public transportation systems improved in the early half of the 20th century, many colleges and universities began sending faculty to off-campus sites so that distant students might take advantages of their courses and programs. “Extension” courses remain today a popular means of remote delivery of education. In the latter half of the 20th century electronic innovations became the means for new approaches to distance education. Early on radio and television were both seen as having great potential to enhance education, particularly for the purpose of remote delivery, only to have had limited success and growth.

Advances in computer or telecommunication technologies led to an educational delivery often characterized as “electronically mediated.” Over the last several years the vast growth in distance education has been characterized primarily by Web-based and Internet technologies. Indeed, it is becoming rare that any course offered on a college campus today not contain some element of electronic mediation.

Illinois State has a long history of reaching out to state constituents through extension programs and is now experimenting with new “distance” delivery modes. The spirit of Illinois State’s “Educating Illinois” action plan encourages “connections between faculty and students that extend beyond the classroom” and “place students at the center of teaching and research.” This type of “engaged learning” is the optimistic goal among distance education’s most ardent supporters.

Interactive Television

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the technology of interactive television (ITV) or “compressed video” became synonymous with distance learning in higher education institutions across the U.S. In the early 1990’s the State of Illinois established the Illinois Video Consortium to provide statewide guidance and coordination as ITV was developed across the state. Funding for the construction of Illinois ITV facilities (but notably not programming, training, staffing or maintenance) were provided by the Higher Education Cooperation Act and administered by a regional consortia of participating universities and community colleges.

Internet

By the mid-1990s the Internet became the medium of choice for distance education, prompting renewed interest and a rapid growth pattern. Nationwide distance education enrollments are expected to rise from less than ½ million in 1998 to over 4.5 million for 2001. By 2006, 75% of all U.S. higher education students are expected to be utilizing some form of distance education and revenue from distance education courses is expected to reach \$61 billion by 2005. Distance education, in particular Internet “e-learning,” has emerged as a viable and profitable Internet activity despite the failure of other e-commerce activities and the infamous collapse of the “dot-coms.” A notable distance education provider, the University of Phoenix Online, saw revenue rise 76% and profits 82% in the last fiscal year. Another inescapable trend is that the methods and tools of Internet education are becoming commonplace in standard higher education classrooms even among the nation’s elite institutions. For example, MIT plans to place virtually all course materials online within the next five years.

Distance Education Defined

As technological advances, particularly in computing and telecommunications, made remote educational delivery more widespread, distance education became more and more synonymous with the electronically enhanced delivery of education. The North Central Association (NCA) of Colleges and Schools has defined distance education for purposes of accreditation review as “*a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction occurs when a student and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education may employ correspondence study, or audio, video or computer technologies.*”

The key elements of this definition involve 1) a separation between the learner and educational resource, 2) a specified amount of instruction in a “distance” delivery mode, and 3) a technology that enables the instruction. This definition model is fairly typical, thus local, state and national reporting of distance education usually includes courses where the instructional delivery mode is at least 50% electronically mediated and the students and the instructor are not in the same place at time of delivery. Often correspondence courses are included in reporting because they meet the definition, even though the enabling technology is the postal service. Extension courses are usually not included in reporting because students and instructors are not in different locations at the time of instruction and there may not be an obvious enabling technology other than the means of transportation.

Illinois Virtual Campus

The Illinois Virtual Campus (IVC) was funded by the Illinois Board of Higher Education in 1998 and officially launched in August 1999. IVC is a clearinghouse of distance education courses offered by colleges and universities in Illinois. The IVC provides an electronic catalog from which potential students can gain access to Illinois higher distance education resources for degree programs, graduate study, and professional development. The IVC also coordinates community college “Student Support Centers” that provide services such as individual advising, network access, test proctoring and technical support to distance students. More recently the IVC is encouraging an effort among Illinois public colleges to collaborate on online degree completion programs.

Illinois Trends

According to Illinois Virtual Campus statistics there were 46,241 student enrollments in 3,554 distance education courses in Illinois during the Spring 2001. From the Fall 1999/Spring 2000 to Fall 2000/Spring 2001 statewide distance education enrollments rose by over 100% and available courses rose by more than 140%. Over 75% of these courses and enrollments were at the community colleges level. Community colleges reported that 92% of their enrollments were in-district students and only 2% were outside of Illinois. Among four-year institutions, 73% of enrollments were in-state with 6% out-of-country. These trends indicate that distance education is rapidly growing in Illinois with the vast majority of “distance” students being local or at least within the state. (For more information on Illinois distance programs see Attachment 1.)

Distance Education at Illinois State

Illinois State has a long history of reaching out to students across Illinois who could not otherwise come to Normal. Illinois State’s extension course efforts can be traced back far in advance of the advent of “distance” courses. Although extension courses are not generally included in the definition of distance education, extension students have many of the same characteristics and issues that typify “distant” students, such as access to campus resources, availability of faculty and other students, admission and registration difficulties, etc. At one time general revenue funds were specifically allocated to departments in order to offer extension courses. These funds were distributed to departments by request each year and averaged around \$270,000 annually in the early 1990s. At

some point in the middle 1990s, these funds were allocated to the permanent budgets of the departments who most utilized them.

The same departments that have practiced extension courses are now moving into other forms of distance education. In many cases these courses are becoming an innovative blend of traditional, extension, and distance delivery methods that stretch our ability to define them.

Interactive Television at Illinois State

Illinois State, following the national trend, first experimented with distance learning in the form of Interactive Television (ITV). Illinois State's first ITV room, located in DeGarmo 52, became functional with the first class going online in the summer of 1994. In 1998 the Extended University (EU) formally assumed the coordination and development of Illinois State's ITV facilities, including the creation of the ITV Facility Management Guide, also approved by the Provost's Advisory Council. In FY1999, through grants from the Central Illinois Higher Education Consortium (CIHEC) and residual income from EU, Illinois State increased its ITV-capable classrooms from one to three, with new rooms being added in the Center for Visual Arts and Williams Hall. Two additional rooms, in Old Union and the Professional Development Building, were also equipped in 1999 to deliver ITV for specialized purposes such as interviewing, meetings, thesis/dissertation defenses, etc.

In FY2001/2002 through EU coordination and funding from CIHEC, the College of Education, and the Illinois State Laboratory Schools three additional ITV rooms in Degarmo, Metcalf, and University High School were ITV enabled. The primary purpose of this project was to provide an unobtrusive observation and interaction mechanism for use between education students and active K-12 classrooms, although these rooms are capable of full-scale ITV classroom events. In Fall 2001 an additional ITV classroom was completed in Edwards Hall, funded by the Mennonite College of Nursing to begin providing nursing offerings to distant students. As of Fall 2001 the campus maintains 9 rooms where ITV educational delivery is possible.

Since the first ITV room was made operational, at least one distance learning course has been offered virtually each semester at Illinois State, usually with a cohort of students meeting in an on-campus ITV classroom combined with a remote site somewhere in Illinois. In addition to standard semester-long courses, these facilities have been used increasingly for one-time events and educational experiences such as small conferences, administrative meetings, and linkages of national and international student classroom situations.

ITV distance learning involves a dedicated room linked to at least one other dedicated room at a remote site. ITV is essentially a room-to-room medium as the technical infrastructure required is not generally portable or standard. Besides unique technical infrastructure, specialized equipment and enhanced room specifications (e.g. improved sound and lighting) are needed for ITV usage. In addition, ITV requires significant staffing overhead to insure transmission quality, reliability and stability. These requirements are needed at each participating site.

A recent cost analysis showed that each ITV course costs Illinois State an additional \$3000 - \$5000 in increased technical infrastructure and support compared with traditional courses. Presumably these costs are also incurred at participating sites for each ITV course. There have been virtually no funds allocated for the development of ITV courses. In addition, when an ITV course is offered, it is through the use of the general departmental course budget.

Internet Courses at Illinois State

Illinois State faculty first began experimenting with Internet-delivered courses around 1996. In these courses virtually the entire educational experience is delivered via the Internet and the students need not be present on campus. Illinois State departments and faculty have individually defined objectives and methods in developing Internet courses. Faculty Technology Support Services (FTSS) has provided consultation and training as desired and when funding permits. Additionally, each year since 1997 internal grants have been made available for individual faculty to experiment with Internet courses and for departmental program development. These funds mostly come from EU

with oversight of priorities provided by the University Distance Education Steering Committee (UDESC).

Internet courses are capable of being transmitted from almost anywhere to almost anywhere, requiring only the availability of the Internet. A new genre of software and services such as WebCT and Blackboard has made course development and delivery less difficult to implement, standardize, and maintain. Illinois State is currently offering between 12-15 full Internet courses each semester. In addition, the use of Web-enabling technologies in traditional courses is becoming almost commonplace.

There have been no tuition dollars or appropriated funds allocated specifically to develop Internet courses at Illinois State. All funds for Internet courses have come from internal or external grants. Where such funds have been available, an average of \$4000 - \$6000 has been expended to develop a typical Internet course. Except for several one-year external grants, there have been no funds allocated to teach Internet courses. Thus Internet courses are offered from general department budgets.

Distance Education Trends at Illinois State

Although distance education courses are being offered in every college, the College of Education (COE) and Mennonite College of Nursing (MCN) have been most active in developing distance courses. COE has a long history and mission of reaching out to statewide learners. COE continues to support cohorts of graduate students around the state through extension and distance delivery methods. In addition, COE has recently launched a series of Internet-based graduate-level science education courses for teachers and is preparing to launch an online non-credit certificate program as a national-standards-based alternative to superintendent of school certification. MCN will have virtually the entire RN to BSN program available online by FY2003, although there will be some residential requirements included.

It is important to note that departments and colleges are choosing their own goals for distance education programs and courses. There is no university edict to promote or encourage the growth of distance education; the university is however necessarily sensitive to ensuring appropriate support and quality as distance education courses are offered. Also, since there is no specific budget to offer distance education courses outside of the allocated department budget, this means that when a distance education course is offered the department is choosing to not offer a standard on-campus course.

The table below was compiled from data supplied by the Institutional Research Office and illustrates a comparison of Illinois State Internet, Interactive Television (ITV) and Extension course trends over the last three years.

	Internet			Interactive Television			Extension		
	Courses	Students	Credit hours	Courses	Students	Credit hours	Courses	Students	Credit hours
FY1999	17	494	1183	5	58	174	68	1074	2866
FY2000	31	533	1600	6	81	243	86	1142	3022
FY2001	42	847	2557	7	38	115	106	1370	3387

The number of semester-long ITV courses offered rose from 5 to 6 to 7 in FY1999, FY2000, and FY2001 respectively. Over that same period student enrollments actually shrank from 58 to 81 to 38, and credit hours fell from 174 in FY1999 to 115 in FY2001 for a decrease of 34%.

In great contrast to ITV, Internet courses rose from 17 to 42 from FY1999 to FY2001 with the number of enrollments increasing from 494 to 847 for an increase of 71%. Credit hour production over that period rose from 1183 to 2557 for an increase of 116%.

Extension courses increased from 68 to 106 from FY1999 to FY2001. Over that period extension course enrollments rose from 1074 to 1370 and credit hours rose from 2866 to 3387 for an 18% increase. (The students at a remote ITV site are officially considered as “extension” students; however the figures above have been adjusted to avoid “double” counting with ITV students.)

Clearly Internet courses are becoming the choice of preference for Illinois State departments and faculty wishing to reach out to distance students. Also, further analysis of FY2001 data shows that each Internet course produced an average of 61 credit hours. This compares to 16 credit hours produced for each ITV courses and 32 credit hours for each extension courses. Not only are Internet courses increasingly popular, but they also appear to be the most administratively efficient in regards to credit hour production.

Illinois State Distance Education Goals

Early in 1997 several distance education-interested offices (Center for Advancement of Teaching, Extended University, Provost’s Office) helped formulate a set of university-wide distance education goals and objectives. The Provost Advisory Council (PAC) subsequently approved these goals in 1998. The approved goal statements are as follows:

Distance education (course delivery involving Internet, Interactive Television, Extension, etc.) at Illinois State is intended to deliver education remotely in ways that:

- Augment the University’s commitment to premier undergraduate and select graduate education; and
- Take advantage of new opportunities to provide its unique educational programs in an evolving educational marketplace.

In general, Illinois State University is not trying to dramatically increase student hour production through distance education; rather it is trying to maintain its current student hour production, fill market niches, and supplement existing quality programs. Illinois State’s distance education goals are to:

- Develop distance education offerings that maintain a high level of quality, integrity, and practicality, and are consistent with institutional values and priorities.
- Build programs and infrastructure to deliver educational services to distant students who may become consumers of Illinois State’s residential programs.
- Service select specialized audiences, such as international or corporate cohorts, who will be enabled electronically to take advantage of programs at a distance.
- Enable students to fully and effectively participate in external educational offerings from other institutions in ways that ultimately strengthen Illinois State’s mission.
- Enable students to fully and effectively utilize internal distance education offerings in a manner that is consistent and supportive of the residential educational experience.

Extended University Oversight

In July 1998, the Provost made permanent the office of Extended University (EU) at Illinois State. The stabilization of EU allowed it to concentrate upon one of its stated focus areas – institutional oversight of distance education. Since July 1997, EU has been collating all of the various university processes and procedures relevant to distance education. As of August 1999, EU now has oversight for most distance and “alternative” education courses at Illinois State University, including Interactive Television (ITV), Internet, Extension, and Contract courses. (A contract course or program is a special arrangement where an external institution “contracts” with the university for a

credit generating educational offering.) EU is the official Illinois State liaison to the Illinois Virtual Campus (IVC) and has been working closely with the IVC in the development of the online Web catalog and in general policy development. Illinois State's current distance offerings are now available on the IVC site. Besides logistical and facilitation support, EU over the last three years has provided over \$500,000 to campus units to develop or support distance education efforts. These funds have been largely used for the development of specific courses and programs, to provide technical support and infrastructure maintenance, and for faculty training.

University Distance Education Committee (UDESC)

In 1999 the University Distance Education Steering Committee (UDESC) was formed to further articulate and facilitate university distance education goals. UDESC, formed under the authority of the Provost and chaired by the director of EU, is constituted by a member from every college, Milner Library, the Computer Technology Support Group, and the Registrar's Office. UDESC makes recommendations to various university offices regarding improved distance education administration and support, and prioritizes and allocates available distance education funds.

University Curriculum Subcommittee on Distance Education Committee Recommendations

The University Curriculum Committee (UCC) was charged by the Provost in the fall of 1999 with developing policies and procedures to help guide the university in the development, offering and evaluation of distance education courses. The charge included reviewing national developments, providing a distance education definition for Illinois State, and recommending priorities and policies for course approval and evaluation.

The UCC appointed a subcommittee that worked during the 1999-2000 academic year. The subcommittee submitted a preliminary report to the UCC in April of 2000. At the request of the Provost, UCC distributed that report to the College Curriculum Committees and to the Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC) for comment in the fall of 2000. A final subcommittee report was produced that reflected the comments received on the report issued by the initial subcommittee and attempted to clarify policies and procedures as envisioned by that subcommittee.

The subcommittee's final report issued in May 2001 (but not yet formally approved or adopted) noted campus distance education concerns and issues. These included pedagogy, quality, approval, institutional notification, administrative support, and accreditation.

The subcommittee recommended:

1. That distance education be defined for the purposes of university oversight as a *formal educational process in which the primary means of instruction occurs when a student and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous and may employ electronically mediated methods such as audio, video, telecommunication and/or computer technologies.*
2. That the relevant cover sheets in the UCC Course Proposal Preparation Package and the GCC Guidelines be amended to include the definition offered in Recommendation 1 and a "check-off" box be added for courses that satisfy it.
3. That UCC and GCC recommend to departments that when any new distance education courses are being planned or when a traditional course is being transformed into a distance format that the department review this development in relation to the NCA distance education guidelines, available at <http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org/>. (See Attachment 2.)
4. That procedures be implemented by UCC and GCC to ensure that the Office of Extended University (EU) is informed about any new or revised distance education offerings.
5. That UCC recommend that the course scheduling process be amended so that when a distance course is scheduled it is noted as such to the scheduling staff.
6. That UCC recommend that the Provost staff create a mechanism for formative evaluation of Illinois State's distance offerings relative to the NCA distance education criteria.

These recommendations were intended to address generally the Provost's original charge and specifically the issues being raised on campus. The recommendations were also designed with the intention that decisions about the appropriateness, content and objectives of distance education courses and programs were best left at the department level; and that the primary institutional interest lies in notification, reporting, infrastructure, support and assessment. (For full copy of the report to Provost, see Attachment 3.)

Recommendations

Given regional and national trends and the current state of distance education at Illinois State, the following recommendations are made.

1. Illinois State should strategically plan for distance education growth and development.

Illinois State will offer distance education courses and employ distance education methods. The University will offer distance education because it is the right thing to do, learners want it, and it is the faculty's responsibility to engage in it. In the spirit of Educating Illinois, making Illinois State's high-quality education more accessible across the state is simply the right thing to do. Many in the Illinois State community have already determined that reaching out beyond the campus boundaries is a desirable goal, hence the boom in distance education and the continued growth of extension courses. Learners, particularly working adults (who are also tax payers), want quality any-time, any-place, any-pace education that fits their lifestyles. In addition, it is one of the many roles of faculty to "push the envelope" of the educational experience and to experiment and improve new instructional methodologies.

Distance education has become one of the necessary components of modern comprehensive university. We could no more not have distance education than we could not have an international studies program and still call ourselves a modern major university. Engaging in distance education is not a choice; it will happen anyway for the reasons mentioned above, but also because distance education is a byproduct of the inescapable trend to add electronic mediation to the education process. Every course on campus now has some aspect of electronic mediation whether it be as simple as an online syllabus or the use of Internet references. Slowly and naturally this use will grow to the point where the students and instructor need not always be together for the educational experience. Eventually some courses will evolve to the point where the students and instructor need never be together. This trend is already upon us.

This is not to say that the university will become an e-institution like some online mail order catalog. International studies programs became an absolute necessity as the world got smaller and more "globalized," largely because of advances in transportation and communication systems. But the university didn't become entirely or overwhelming international. It became apparent that many general courses required some global perspective, that the university contain some specific international programs, and that all students have an international component to their education. To function as an informed citizen of our nation one must have an international perspective. This is also the case with distance education, or more specifically, the electronic mediation of education. It is now vital that many general courses have electronic mediation, that the university contain some specific distance education programs, and that all students know how to operate in an electronically mediated world. Like an international perspective, electronic mediation is an inescapable aspect of learning and functioning in our highly complex and interdependent world.

Since it is the right thing to do and will happen anyway, Illinois State should plan strategically for distance education and electronic mediation development. Planning for resource and support should consider both courses and programs that fall within a distance education definition as well as the fact that education itself is becoming electronically mediated.

Action 1: The university broad distance education goals should be reviewed and revised to reflect these realities as well as to incorporate relevant Educating Illinois themes.

2. **Illinois State should encourage departments/colleges to develop their own distance education strategic niches.** There is no need for Illinois State to pursue specific university-wide enrollment goals or objectives. The reason for this is that Illinois State is unlikely to face competitive pressures resulting from the national growth of distance education. Due to favorable local economic conditions, stable population growth, superior regional transportation infrastructure, statewide education trends, and quality, in-demand programs Illinois State will have no problem maintaining its state mandated maximum enrollment into the foreseeable future without greatly increasing its distance education offerings. Over the last three years, while distance education enrollments have skyrocketed nationally and statewide, Illinois State has increasingly become a “school of choice” in Illinois, continually raising admittance standards and closing registrations earlier. However, while the university overall will have no problem maintaining total enrollments, some individual departments may face enrollment problems and/or experience competition from quality competitors entering the distance education market. In addition, an Illinois State department or college may choose to reach out to distance students to provide service to strategic cohorts of Illinois, international or business constituencies. Illinois State departments should be allowed to pursue their distance education interests without a general university approval process, within the constraints listed in recommendation # 3.

Action 2: The recommendations included in the University Curriculum Committee Distance Education Report should be approved and adopted and communicated to all academic departments and colleges.

3. **Illinois State should develop campus wide standards, support and infrastructure for distance education.** As departments develop distance education offerings, care should be taken to insure that courses meet an acceptable level of pedagogical and technical quality as well as maintain an appropriate Illinois State image and style. Also, given always limited resources, a set of standards should be created that provides quality-driven templates to guide distance education development. Policies should also be developed and enforced that steer distance education courses into approved technologies, methods, and infrastructure. The intent of these standards and templates is not to place an approval process on the content and objectives of such courses, but to insure technical quality and a consistent educational product. Courses that would be advertised and promoted (as in the Illinois Virtual Campus catalog or Illinois State’s registration book) as distance education courses would need to adhere to approved technical standards and institutional image guidelines. We might also consider forming a team that would provide project management and oversight for the development of distance education projects. Such teams would be formed based on the project scope and needs, and would ensure high-quality, timely and effective distance education programs.

Action 3: Empower an ad-hoc committee consisting of appropriate university offices/working groups (including UDESC, EU, Executive Committee for Academic Computing, Milner Library, Computer Technology Support Group, Center for Advancement of Teaching, University Communications, etc.) to develop templates, standards, and policies. This committee could also form project management teams when needed.

4. **Illinois State should investigate alternatives to Interactive Television (ITV).** ITV course delivery has proven to be complicated and costly. University staff have routinely found themselves working prolonged hours to provide quality service. Despite increasing costs and

efforts, only 38 Illinois State students were served by ITV in FY2001. The main advantage that ITV has over other electronic distance means is high quality interactive real-time video. Even without high quality video, the Internet has become the unquestioned choice for newly-developed distance education delivery. With recent improvements in telecommunication technologies and advances in Internet capacity, we are on the verge of providing sufficient quality video for distance instruction across the Internet. It is time to investigate alternative ways to deliver real-time, two-way video, whether over emerging Internet protocols or some other means.

Action 4: Charge a committee of appropriate campus units to investigate, experiment and make recommendations regarding alternatives for ITV courses and delivery means. (This committee could be a subset of the one mentioned in Action #3.)

5. **Illinois State should direct student outreach fees to activities and services that relate to the students that pay them.** Students that are in ITV, Internet, and Extension courses (and no other courses) are charged an “outreach fee” instead of traditional student fees. The rationale for this is that these type of students will not ordinarily be on campus and are thus unlikely to benefit from fee services such as Bone Center, Redbird Arena, student clubs, etc. However, since there are other specific additional costs associated with outreach or “distance” students and since it wouldn’t be fair to charge residential students more for their education, an “outreach” fee is considered appropriate. Currently this fee is \$30 per credit hour and will be raised to whatever the current traditional fee is for Fall/2002. In Fall/1999 – Spring/2000 these fees amounted to over \$110,000. Since this didn’t include summer hours and given the increase in “outreach” enrollments Fall/2000 – Spring/2001, the total collected is estimated at around \$150,000 for last fiscal year. Currently these funds are processed along with traditional student fees, with no fee funds allocated for distance education or outreach student needs. The outreach fees collected should be designated for activities and services that support the distance students who pay them.

Action 5: Beginning in FY2003, designate the outreach fees to be allocated to an account to be utilized for outreach or distance students. Extended University would act as fiscal agent of this account and, with consultation and approval from UDESC, allocate these funds appropriately.

Attachment 1
Analysis of Current State of Online Courses & Programs
Source: Excerpt from IVC proposal draft to ICN, December, 2001

The Illinois Virtual Campus (IVC) database lists ten online associate degrees, thirty-seven certificate programs, six baccalaureate degree completion programs, and fifteen master's level programs.

A scan of the levels of online degree programs available to students in the IVC database clearly indicates that program development is needed at the baccalaureate degree completion level. A review of the six baccalaureate degree completion programs finds the following programs listed:

- Liberal Studies Online (UIS)
- Board of Trustees Bachelor of Arts (EIU & WIU)
- Management & Leadership (Judson College)
- Health Arts (University of St. Francis)
- School of New learning (DePaul University)

Clearly, the types of baccalaureate degree completion programs missing are two fold: 1) high demand and/or 2) discipline specific. Based on multiple sources (IBHE, Lexington Group, IVC), high demand areas include:

- Business (e.g., accounting, finance, general business)
- Elementary education with a major or minor in a discipline
- Information technology
- Engineering
- Allied health

Building on Opportunities

There are ten online associate degree programs listed in the IVC database that might be appropriate from which to build online baccalaureate degree programs. Associate degrees listed include:

- Associate of Applied Science in Computer Information Systems – Microcomputer Applications (College of Lake County)
- Associate of Applied Science in Multimedia Communications (CLC)
- Associate of Arts (CLC)
- Business Administration (Parkland College)
- Business Education (PC)
- Business Management (PC)
- General Studies (PC)
- Mass Communications: Advertising/Public Relations (PC)
- Mass Communications: Journalism (PC)
- Psychology (PC)

There are also a good number of online courses in specific disciplines at the undergraduate level listed in the IVC database. Some of these might pertain to this initiative and would be appropriate for online baccalaureate completion degree programs in both high demand areas and in discipline-specific areas.

- 33 biological sciences/life sciences
- 244 business management and administrative services
- 22 communications
- 188 computer and information sciences
- 55 education
- 10 engineering and engineering technologies
- 141 English and literature
- 15 foreign language
- 38 health professions and related sciences
- 9 law and legal studies
- 24 liberal arts sciences, general studies and humanities
- 80 mathematics
- 5 multi/interdisciplinary studies
- 15 philosophy and religion
- 39 physical sciences
- 50 psychology
- 136 social science and history
- 48 visual and performing arts

Conditions are favorable for online baccalaureate degrees delivered by Illinois universities. Online courses and program enrollments are rising exponentially each year. The following table presents the number of Illinois college/university courses and course enrollments for the past two academic years.

	Fall 1999/ Spring 2000	Fall 2000/ Spring 2001
Total Distance Courses	2,575	6,169
Total Course Enrollment	41,083	83,946
Number of Internet Courses	1,346	3,012
Internet Course Enrollments	15,775	33,348

For-profit and out-of-state online universities are finding room in the higher education venue, causing Illinois' universities to think carefully about their role in online learning. Collectively, we would like to see Illinois students enroll in our Illinois colleges and universities.

The Illinois Prairie Internet Consortium (IPIC) and the Western Illinois Education Consortium (WIEC) have developed and tested models for sharing course development, online program planning and shared course delivery. They have successfully addressed a number of issues common to collaboration efforts of higher education institutions. The administrative processes that scaffold these partnerships have been tested and refined. IPIC has demonstrated effective use of the Internet Course Exchange (ICE) software developed in-house, and they are interested in modifying the ICE system to support course sharing by four-year universities. IPIC and IVC staff are working together to align their two databases in order to share data more efficiently and to ease the burden of data entry on IPIC and IVC providers.

A careful review of the IVC online course and program database, and the favorable climate for sharing course and program planning, development, and delivery indicate that it is an ideal time for moving the state's online opportunities forward quickly and exponentially.

Attachment 2

NCA Distance Learning Guidelines

Source: <http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org/resources/guidelines/index.html>

Guidelines for Distance Education

Please Note: If you are a student seeking information on distance learning programs, please see [Information on Distance Learning Programs](#).

In order to facilitate the evaluation of distance education throughout the United States, the regional accrediting associations have agreed upon the following definition and guidelines. This agreement is based on an extension of the Principles developed by the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE).

DEFINITION:

Distance education is defined, for the purposes of accreditation review, as a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction occurs when student and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education may employ correspondence study, or audio, video, or computer technologies.

GUIDELINES:

Any institution offering distance education is expected to meet the requirements of its own regional accrediting body, and be guided by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) Principles. In addition, an institution is expected to address, in its self-studies and/or proposals for institutional change, the following expectations, which it can anticipate will be reviewed by its regional accrediting commission.

Curriculum and Instruction

- Programs provide for timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty, and among students.
- The institution's faculty assumes responsibility for and exercises oversight over distance education, ensuring both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction.
- The institution ensures that the technology used is appropriate to the nature and objectives of the programs.
- The institution ensures the currency of materials, programs, and courses.
- The institution's distance education policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, faculty compensation, copyright issues, and the utilization of revenue derived from the creation and production of software, telecourses, or other media products.
- The institution provides appropriate faculty support services specifically related to distance education.

- The institution provides appropriate training for faculty who teach in distance education programs.

Evaluation and Assessment

- The institution assesses student capability to succeed in distance education programs and applies this information to admission and recruiting policies and decisions.
- The institution evaluates the educational effectiveness of its distance education programs (including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction) to ensure comparability to campus-based programs.
- The institution ensures the integrity of student work and the credibility of the degrees and credits it awards.

Library and Learning Resources

- The institution ensures that students have access to and can effectively use appropriate library resources.
- The institution monitors whether students make appropriate use of learning resources
- The institution provides laboratories, facilities, and equipment appropriate to the courses or programs.

Student Services

- The institution provides adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support the programs, including admissions, financial aid, academic advising, delivery of course materials, and placement and counseling.
- The institution provides an adequate means for resolving student complaints.
- The institution provides to students advertising, recruiting, and admissions information that adequately and accurately represents the programs, requirements, and services available.
- The institution ensures that students admitted possess the knowledge and equipment necessary to use the technology employed in the program, and provides aid to students who are experiencing difficulty using the required technology.

Facilities and Finances

- The institution possesses the equipment and technical expertise required for distance education.
- The institution's long range planning, budgeting, and policy development processes reflect the facilities, staffing, equipment and other resources essential to the viability and effectiveness of the distance education program.

Attachment 3
UCC Distance Education Recommendations/Cover Letter
Source: Report to Provost, May 2001

To: Al Goldfarb, Provost

From: Larry Alferink
Undergraduate Studies

Re: Distance Education Report

Date: May 3, 2001

In the Spring of 2000, the University Curriculum Committee sent you the Distance Education Report which had been prepared by the Distance Education Subcommittee of UCC. Last fall, you asked UCC if they had obtained feedback on the report from the Colleges, and if not to solicit this feedback. Hence, UCC asked each College Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Curriculum Committee to review the report and provide feedback on the report.

By the end of the fall semester, feedback had been received from most of the Colleges. In general, the feedback indicated that the report recommended curriculum procedures which seemed highly bureaucratic in nature and significant criticism was directed at procedures which were viewed as addressing pedagogy rather than curricular issues. UCC reviewed all of the feedback and recommended that a new subcommittee composed of several members from the original subcommittee and the current UCC revise the document in response to the feedback.

The new subcommittee, chaired by Galen Crow, a member of the original subcommittee, reviewed the feedback and decided to revise the report to include the original charge to the committee and to add a brief summary of special problems potentially created by distance education. This was done to provide a context in which to better understand the recommendations. Third, the recommendations on curricular procedures were clarified to better reflect the intent of the original subcommittee to require a curricular review of courses offered as distance education sections, but to have the responsibility for this curricular review rest with the department rather than with UCC as the previous report was commonly interpreted. The revised report was then circulated to all College Curriculum Committees and to GCC with a request for feedback.

This feedback was generally positive. Two committees noted that not all of the original charges were addressed, an explicit decision made by the original subcommittee. In particular, charge 3 regarding priorities and portions of charge 5 (e. g. residency requirements) were not fully addressed and may require future attention. In addition, there was concern about recommendation 6 which called for a mandatory "unobtrusive web-enabled" assessment system to used with each distance education class to meet NCA concerns. UCC clarified this recommendation to make the language more generic and approved the report. One CCC recommended that the report be revisited in several years, perhaps with summary data assessing the effectiveness of distance education. I am forwarding the revised report to you. Please let me know if it is appropriate to distribute this report to departments and colleges and to incorporate the appropriate recommendations in UCC and GCC guidelines. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Cc: Eric Thomas
Galen Crow
Sandy Little

**Report of the University Curriculum Committee's
Subcommittee on Distance Education
(May 2001)**

Background

Distance education as defined by the North Central Association (NCA) of Colleges and Schools for purposes of accreditation review is "a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction occurs when a student and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education may employ correspondence study, or audio, video or computer technologies." When computer or telecommunication delivery is employed this type of instruction is often said to be "electronically mediated." Over the last several years the vast growth in distance education has been characterized primarily by Web-based and Internet technologies. Indeed, it is becoming rare that any course offered on a college campus today not contain some element of electronic mediation.

Electronically mediated courses are becoming increasingly popular at Illinois State. The credit hour production of courses offered entirely via electronic mediation at Illinois State increased by 72% between FY1999 and FY2000, and this growth trend continues. Several academic programs to be offered either primarily or completely via the Internet are currently in production. Over the last three years, Illinois State has provided funds to campus units of over \$500,000 to develop or support distance education efforts.

The University Curriculum Committee (UCC) was charged by the Provost in the fall of 1999 with developing policies and procedures to help guide the university in the development, offering and evaluation of distance education courses.

Charge from Provost Goldfarb

1. Review the statewide and national discussions concerning approaches to distance education in higher education.
2. Define "distance education" for purposes of the University Curriculum Committee.
3. Recommend academic priorities that would provide guidance to the campus for the development of distance education offerings (e. g. departments, colleges, audiences, programs, courses).
4. Develop policies for the review and approval of distance education courses. How are new distance education courses reviewed for approval? How are existing courses that are modified or adapted for distance education reviewed? Consult with college curriculum committees, the Graduate Curriculum Committee, and Extended University regarding implementation.
5. Develop recommended policies concerning university credit for distance education courses (e.g. residency requirements, transfer credit, graduation requirements, etc.) for consideration by the Academic Senate.

UCC appointed a subcommittee that worked during the 1999-2000 academic year, developed a report that addressed charges one through four, and submitted this report to the UCC in April of 2000. At the request of the Provost, UCC distributed this report to the College Curriculum Committees and to the Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC) for comment in the fall of 2000. This version of the

report reflects the comments received on the report issued by the initial subcommittee and attempts to clarify policies and procedures as envisioned by that subcommittee.

Problem Being Addressed

Four issues have raised concerns among faculty, staff, and administrators who have tracked the development of distance education at Illinois State:

1. **Pedagogy and Quality.** Are electronically mediated courses merely a “delivery” issue or do they represent such a dramatic change in how instruction is offered that a new model of pedagogy and evaluation need be considered? How can the quality of these innovative offerings be insured given existing evaluation and curricular processes designed for more traditional courses and programs?
2. **Notification or Approval Processes.** Currently there exists no approval processes that relate specifically to distance education or electronically mediated courses if the course is already in existence as an on-campus course. Faculty can transform an on-campus course into an entirely distance course without any prior approval from any faculty committee or university administrator, including her/his department chair.
3. **Administrative Support.** Distance education and various aspects of electronic mediation create a new set of service demands upon the university. How are distance students ensured an appropriate level of support and access to services such as registration, library, computer, Internet, placement, etc.? How can university support staff plan accordingly for the strains placed on the technological and administrative infrastructure related to distance methods? Without a mechanism for prior notification or approval regarding distance education courses being planned, in development, or being offered, university administrators cannot properly plan and implement adequate support in a timely manner.
4. **Accreditation.** National accreditation bodies are beginning to seriously review distance education developments at institutions of higher education. NCA, Illinois State’s principal accrediting agency, published “Guidelines for Distance Education” in its 1997 NCA-CIHE Handbook of Accreditation. NCA has more recently (2000) collaborated with 7 other regional accrediting bodies to draft the “Statement of the Regional Accrediting Commissions on the Evaluation of Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs.” Given the interest of the accrediting agencies in distance, it is highly likely that the development of distance education at Illinois State will be an area of review and analysis for the 2005 on-site visit of the NCA. In order to satisfy a site review of distance education offerings, the university should be able to demonstrate appropriate mechanisms for approval, oversight, administrative support, and evaluation of distance education courses and programs.

Discussion

The UCC was charged by the Provost to address issues related to distance education. While not all of the issues in distance education are curricular in nature, all new courses and programs would follow the normal curricular process for approval at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and for existing courses and programs, a modest degree of oversight is perhaps necessary to ensure that the adaptation of existing courses to distance education methods is appropriate. Just as the general education process looked carefully at the linkage of pedagogy to curricular goals and objectives, a process may be needed to ensure that distance education techniques are applied in ways that match curricular objectives. While new guidelines and governance bodies could be created to provide the necessary oversight, it seems unnecessary to create new bureaucratic structures until experience has demonstrated they are needed. At the present time, the necessary curricular processes could be

addressed through existing UCC guidelines for undergraduate courses and programs and through GCC guidelines for graduate courses and programs. Likewise the UCC and GCC could serve as an appropriate clearinghouse for informing other campus bodies of distance education courses or programs which are in the process of development.

Finally, any potential solution to these concerns needs to be sensitive to faculty and departmental autonomy and academic freedom. It is the intention of the following recommendations that these issues are generally best deliberated at the department level. This is particularly true with respect to the development of plans for providing existing courses or programs through a distance education mode, with consultation with their College Dean as appropriate. Individual departments should consciously provide the necessary oversight of their distance education offerings and keep university support staffs informed of their related plans. Departments should work with appropriate offices (e. g., University Assessment Office) regarding periodic assessment of the quality of these offerings for purposes of program review or institutional accreditation.

Recommendations

1. That distance education be defined for the purposes of university oversight as a *formal educational process in which the primary means of instruction occurs when a student and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous and may employ electronically mediated methods such as audio, video, telecommunication and/or computer technologies.* This definition differs from NCA in that it a) adds the more currently utilized term “electronically mediated,” and b) it substitutes the phrase “primary means” for “majority” in reference to the amount of a course or program offered in a distant format. The intention of the latter difference is to provide a definition that requires a distance degree of substantially more than half of the course instruction. It would ultimately be left to the offering department to interpret this definition to its situation and courses.
2. That the relevant cover sheets in the UCC Course Proposal Preparation Package and the GCC Guidelines be amended to include the definition offered in Recommendation 1 and a “check-off” box be added for courses that satisfy it. The new check-off box would be indicated whenever any course was intended to meet this definition, even if the intention was to offer distant sections only minimally from a set of multiple course offerings. Also, when transforming an existing traditional course to a distance format the proposal form need be processed at the department level only and then sent to the college and UCC as an information item. Departments may elect to delegate this responsibility to the department chair or involve other normal departmental curricular processes as appropriate.
3. That UCC and GCC recommend to departments that when any new distance education courses are being planned or when a traditional course is being transformed into a distance format that the department review this development in relation to the NCA distance education guidelines, available at <http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org/>.
4. That procedures be implemented by UCC and GCC to ensure that the Office of Extended University (EU) is informed about any new or revised distance education offerings. UCC and GCC would use the information collected in Recommendation 2 to expedite these procedures. It would then be EU’s responsibility to inform all other affected support units and to recommend any appropriate consultation for the offering department.
5. That UCC recommend that the course scheduling process be amended so that when a distance course is scheduled it is noted as such to the scheduling staff.

6. That UCC recommend that the Provost staff create a mechanism for formative evaluation of Illinois State's distance offerings relative to the NCA distance education criteria. This evaluative instrument specifically would not duplicate or replace departmental evaluation instruments. The recommendation should state that any course that requests to be described as a distance education offering in any university communication (i.e. registration book) would be required to apply this distance evaluation.