Report of the Ad Hoc Task Force on Distance Education

Angelo State University

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Executive Summary:

Does Angelo State University (ASU) want to expand its Distance Education offerings? If so, by how much and in what areas? How do we plan to pay for such an expansion and how will this fit into our institutional mission and goals? Can we use Distance Education to facilitate our professional development efforts? Do we understand the difference between Distance Education programs and programs that use Distance Education? These are only a few of the critical questions facing ASU as we contemplate our digital future.

The first step toward answering the many questions surrounding DE is creating new policies or changing existing policies so that ASU has the proper structures in place to respond effectively. In some cases, existing ASU policy works against us and may actually encourage students to take DE coursework elsewhere. Existing class scheduling is ad-hoc and generally non-responsive to student needs. In fairness, no one knows this to be a fact because it appears no one has asked. Recommendations for DE need to be considered in the context of other simple changes that can be made and would allow ASU to be more responsive to student needs (e.g. block scheduling, afternoon/evening classes). There is little point in implementing any of the recommendations in this report if the proper policy foundations are not laid first.

The implications of a well-instituted DE plan are campuswide. Using opportunities in DE as the basis for our SACS Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) a real possibility. Discussions should begin soon to answer the questions posed in the first paragraph above. Fiscal resources, administrative structures, student learning outcomes, overall enrollment trends, and faculty engagement are intertwined with the questions about how this university deals with DE.

As a starting point, a *Distance Education* (DE) *Task Force* was created during the Fall 2006 semester. This group based its work on a previous institutional study with the intent of examining if, how, and when Angelo State University should begin operationalizing any expansion of our existing DE offerings.

Significant ASU-specific marketing opportunities exist for attracting new students into higher education; chief among these are responses to House Bill 1 enacted by the 2006 legislature and the military student market passing through Goodfellow Air Force Base. In addition, there are significant opportunities for enhancing SCH production from our extant student population through more responsive and targeted summer school programs. However, the personnel costs associated with an expansion of our DE programs are non-trivial. New hires, a change in emphasis on the job skills of existing hires, and the retraining of extant personnel are chief among these costs. These changes can only happen in the context of an unambiguous DE commitment by both the administration and the faculty.

The transition to an increased emphasis on DE delivery will happen. The only thing optional about this transition is how well ASU responds to the identified market conditions. ASU has traditionally been a student-centered institution. The DE Task Force recognizes that we will only retain this reputation if our definition of *student* evolves. Our mission and goals remain unchanged; how we reach them does not. The report of the DE Task Force discusses many of those operational challenges.

Acknowledgements:

The Distance Education (DE) Task Force is indebted to the unselfish participation and input of two individuals. Dr. Elizabeth "Beth" Tebeaux, Professor of English and former Director of DE at Texas A&M University demonstrated an unwavering commitment to assisting ASU and all of west central Texas in this endeavor. We based many portions of this report on her experiences while implementing DE programs at College Station. A White Paper summarizing her recommendations is included as Appendix B of this document. Dr. Deborrah Hebert, Dean of Students at ASU, was generous with both her time and insights into the effects of major new educational initiatives, such as DE plans, on the fiscal and emotional aspects of our students' individual and collective lives.

Committee Charge:

In October 2006, Dr. Don Coers, ASU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, named an Ad Hoc Task Force on Distance Education (hereafter the *Task Force*) and supplied a set of five minimal charges:

1) What markets, including dual credit possibilities, should ASU target for future online courses?
2) How might those courses help ASU increase its enrollment during summer sessions?
3) What incentives should ASU faculty be offered to encourage development of online courses?
4) What additional fees should ASU charge for online courses?
5) Should ASU consider requiring the successful completion of at least one online course for graduation?

In addition, the Ad Hoc Committee had the latitude to identify and address other issues deemed relevant to our work. We produced four additional items:

6) What are the *Best Practices* dictated by internal and external policy? What recommendations should we make in support of these practices?
7) What are the effects of DE on *Student Life*?
8) How should we market DE offerings?
9) What are the evolving SACS criteria relevant to DE, and how should we design DE recommendations to address those criteria?

Membership:
The members of the Task Force and authors of this document were:
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Introduction:

Distance Education is high on the short list of academic hot buttons. Originally conceived around now-outdated modes such as the mailing of videotapes, DE has transitioned to Internet-based classrooms with a rich panoply of technological tools doing everything from grading exams to providing AI-based tutorials. Legislatures around the country have been told that DE will make college campuses obsolete. The popular press often likens (perhaps hysterically) developments in DE to the invention of the Gutenberg Press. There is a clear thread in many of these discussions that higher education be commoditized. The implicit assumption is that students will become like automobile drivers, filling up their intellectual gas tanks at whatever time and whichever location they deem the cheapest or most convenient. As a traditional institution, ASU will expand our presence in the DE world deliberately.

ASU is lucky to have been spared the *bleeding edge* experience of being an early adopter of DE technology. Although far from mature, the DE experience of today has much more potential for student learning than passively watching a videotape or mailing in essays or exercises for an old-fashioned correspondence course. That said, it is a mistake to think that a change in the media delivery system somehow makes DE inherently superior.

Educational research in the late 1990s settled heavily on the concept that different students have different inherent learning abilities or styles. One can find an excellent on-line tutorial about learning styles in Loechelt (2002). Many students, particularly those with self-directed learning styles, find the concept of DE appealing. Some students will translate DE's *anytime/anywhere* mantra into "no class", "sleep late", or "doesn't interfere with my work schedule." But success in such a freeform environment requires learners with moderately high self-discipline. This profile of a successful DE learner is one of the primary reasons that most DE success stories revolve around graduate and professional programs catering to more mature and, presumably, disciplined students.

The key difference in DE compared to traditional delivery systems is the promise of student engagement through self-directed learning. Even relatively primitive DE courses include one-on-one interaction with the instructor, asynchronous 24/7 convenience, and a wealth of on-line library resources. The 24/7 aspect of DE is a primary attractant for many students. But their ability to use this feature to their own advantage is strongly controlled by their own learning styles (see Synchronous vs. Asynchronous Tutorials, Beyth-Marom et al., 2005). Practitioners of internet-delivered DE courses claim that the perceived anonymity of the computer screen often acts to engage students more than traditional classrooms populated by jeering peers or gruff and intimidating faculty. However, the perceived *personal* aspect of DE delivery usually demands more faculty time than a traditional lecture class. Hillstock (2005) summarizes several of these important learning and delivery interactions in Misconceptions about DE. The bottom line is that DE is not an academic *magic bullet*. But it does have a specific and an effective place.

In order to remain competitive and to expand our potential learning audience, ASU should expand its use of DE as a tool. But deploying it wisely is a learned skill, not a policy directive. The ASU early DE adopters (e.g. Nursing) are a niche faculty with a niche market.

Discussion:

In a best case scenario, DE evolves from existing classes and programs. Ideally, the most technologically literate faculty begin with a traditional lecture class and start to add technological elements which enhance the learning experience. Many faculty begin by using *PowerPoint* presentations, then add a class *list serve*, next post their class notes on a website, and eventually the entire lecture is on line. If they choose to add some on-line tutorial modules and testing sections, they rapidly reach a point where some students begin to question the wisdom of physically showing up for a traditional lecture. A "distance" experience has been born.

In some sense, it is fortunate that most ASU faculty have had the institutional luxury of watching others blaze the trails (or follow the dead-ends) of implementing non-traditional instructional methods in Distance Education. Although it is easy to get excited by DE because of its novelty, the DE Task Force believes that there is no philosophical difference in the many different forms of technology-mediated instruction (TMI). Indeed, for our purposes, TMI is often a more accurate term since it is reasonable to expect that many of our so-called DE offerings in the future will, in fact, be asynchronous local events (i.e. offered locally, not at a distance). Labs, studios, on-line tutorials, and time-shifted lectures are all examples of TMI.

The Task Force emphasizes that TMI/DE is an instructional medium and a pedagogical technique. Like internships, science labs or art studios, DE is simply another means to achieve the goal of creating exemplary student learning outcomes. As discussed in this report's marketing section (starting on page 9), there is no profound reason to limit our DE market to non-resident students.

The dedicated labs, classrooms, and studios of a traditional educational experience are expensive. By and large, we have built them around a fiscal model which covers the costs of our physical plant and the personnel required to operate it. DE is also expensive. It is dangerous to assume that DE is a cheap educational supplement. Although it is true that DE is much less demanding on physical facilities, it is much more demanding on personnel. Programs designed around a DE model can do quite well, but it is easy for a *bricks and mortar* team to get swamped in the individualized student demands of the DE world. The fiscal aspects of DE implementation should be approached carefully.

Much of this report deals with aspects of marketing DE programs originating from ASU. Before delving too far into such discussions, it is important that the faculty and administration ask themselves what they want to achieve from their DE investment. The Task Force asks that the University consider a continuum of technology-mediated DE. On one end of this spectrum is a web-assisted classroom with optional physical attendance; on the other end of this spectrum is something like the University of Phoenix with its 100% distance model. In the first case, DE enhances the experience of our existing student population. We are not, however, adding any net new SCH production. In the second case, we have no traditional students, so we are focused completely on generating net new SCH production via the DE tool. ASU's reality will lie somewhere between these two extremes; in the near term the Task Force predicts it will be closer to the former. Where we ultimately land on this continuum is a point that should be remembered throughout the discussions in this document.

The intent of the Task Force is to identify opportunities where DE can increase the SCH production from our existing students; use DE as a recruitment tool to attract high school students who would not otherwise attend college at all (*Closing the Gaps*); recruit college-bound students who would not otherwise attend ASU; entice re-entry, military, and other non-traditional students back into school; and supplement the educational achievements from lifelong learners. In all of these cases, our primary emphasis is on achieving what should be our normal growth goals by using DE as a tool to boost the presence of ASU throughout our primary marketing areas. The Task Force made an assumption early on that ASU will likely not pursue direct competition with national DE-exclusive entities like the University of Phoneix.

The 2002-2007 ASU Institutional Plan for DE (Appendix C) offered an excellent structural starting point for implementing additional distance education campaigns. As cited in the ASU Institutional Plan for DE, it is important for the reader to distinguish between individual DE class sections and fully developed DE programs (which involve a coordinated curricula delivered in a non-traditional format). In the future, we may expect a plethora of DE offerings for individual classes and relatively fewer full-blown DE programs. We should retain most of the procedures for approving and monitoring DE described in the Institutional Plan for DE. As we add additional programs, beyond nursing, other procedures can help facilitate development in specific disciplines.

Combining traditional courses/programs with non-traditional delivery mechanisms will be successful only if the president, provost, CIO, CFO, deans, and selected faculty, who see the pedagogical and/or financial value of offering courses/programs via TMI or DE, support the concept. Key to this support is the recognition that ASU's Mission is served by responding to the different needs of different student populations.

In particular, the university administration must support the effort financially and philosophically. Both the president and the provost should use their positions to clarify and support the university's goals in extending DE offerings. Financial support will be required, particularly for start-up initiatives. Faculty need to know that the administration believes in the new initiatives and that it will treat DE programs with the same respect given to traditional programs. Faculty will likely need encouragement to look forward rather than backward in helping ASU remain competitive.

Effects of Swirling and SCH Leakage:

> *"There is nothing in the world that some man cannot make a little worse and sell*
> *a little cheaper, and he who considers price only is that man's lawful prey."*
> John Ruskin (1819-1900)

The Dictionary (Double-Tongued) of Slang defines *swirling* as: "*n.* achieving a higher education degree via enrollment at two or more institutions, either simultaneously or consecutively". Anecdotal descriptions of the phenomena can be found as early as 2003 in an article by Deborah Smith Bailey (The Monitor of the American Psychological Association). A 2006 article in The Oregonian, by Shelby Oppel Wood, describes an actual institutional endorsement of the practice.

Taken to its logical conclusion, the practice of swirling describes a near future scenario in which higher education becomes a commodity with the concomitant loss of institutional oversight over quality, breadth, depth, and completeness of a students degree. From an accreditation standpoint, swirling makes it extremely difficult (if not impossible) for an institution to certify the learning outcomes of its graduates.

A critical fiscal outcome of swirling is *SCH Leakage*, which is defined here as credit hours lost to other institutions after a student has been admitted and enrolled for the first semester at a primary institution. Thus, hours imported by transferring students are not included in this term. SCH Leakage does include credits taken by non-resident students during summer terms away from San Angelo, hours earned at Howard College, and DE credits earned by ASU students at other accredited institutions.

Collectively, the trend of swirling and SCH leakage is facilitated by a profusion of DE offerings available to almost anyone, anytime, anywhere on the planet. The potential for abuse by values-challenged tech-savvy students seems real. The Texas legislature mandates that all public higher education institutions accept transfer credit for *core curriculum* coursework. If a student chooses to take core courses elsewhere, including via DE offerings, and transfer them into ASU, we are obligated to accept and apply those credits. With the blessing (encouragement?) of the legislature, the Task Force expects this trend to accelerate.

Swirling and SCH Leakage have two ethical implications for Angelo State University: First, we have an obligation to ensure the intellectual quality of our graduates. This obligation includes fiscal stewardship of the institution that fulfills this obligation. Second, we should exercise prudence in our own DE offerings to ensure that our actions are not jeopardizing that same obligation by other institutions. In both cases, what is required is a clear and unambiguous defining relationship between ASU and our students. While some degree of academic promiscuity will always be present (e.g. military, junior college transfers), we should encourage serial monogamy once a student has established a relationship with ASU. Although not a part of our charge, the Task Force discussed this issue at some length and strongly recommends that we redouble efforts to enhance our relationship with our own students.

**Charge I: What markets, including dual credit possibilities,
should ASU target for future online courses?**

The Task Force identified several distinct markets for DE offerings. As noted below, some of these markets would support only individual classes (or collections of classes), some would support full-blown programs, and others would involve degree completion.

The appeal of DE can be broken into six generic markets, only two of which are controlled by ASU.

  I. DE enables resident students to take specialized classes that the local campus does not offer. This market is controlled by ASU via the frequency and breadth of our own course offerings. This market is presently a source of some SCH leakage from ASU. Resolving this market could restore some of the SCH production that *should be ours*.
      — Individual Class(es)

 II. DE enables resident students to resolve conflicts between two or more courses offered simultaneously. This market is also controlled by ASU; in this case by the internal timing of individual class offerings. This market is also likely a source of SCH leakage from ASU. Resolving this market may lead to shortened times to degree completion.
      — Individual Class(es)

III. DE enables locally-employed residents whose work schedule conflicts with traditional class times to become students. This group includes high school students seeking a *dual-credit* or *middle college* experience. Resolving this time conflict could lead to net new SCH production.
      — Individual Class(es)
      — or Programs

 IV. DE enables ASU to serve students who live too far from campus to be *traditional* residential or commuter students. Resolving this geographical conflict could lead to net new SCH production.   `   — Programs

  V. DE could enable non-traditional students (e.g. re-entry and military) to overcome geotemporal restrictions to complete degrees. This market is also known as *degree-completers* and *swirlers* (discussed below). Resolving these conflicts could lead to net new SCH production.
      — Individual Class(es)
      — or Programs

 VI. DE could dramatically increase the reach of Continuing Education programs and other non-academic credit offerings.
      — Individual Class(es)

The first of these reasons (availability of specialized classes) was the most common rationale for a traditional correspondence course. The last five (class schedule conflicts, work schedule conflicts, physical distance constraints, chaotic academic planning, and non-degree seeking students) are all essentially "new" problems that did not have viable solutions. DE is thus a potential solution for what were formerly insoluble problems of time and space.

The market for DE, in broad terms, is anyone who wants to learn but does not (or is not able to) attend traditional classroom-based lectures. Since almost any adult learner can claim one or all of the reasons from the list above, the act of identifying a potential *distance student* has become superfluous. Functionally everyone is a potential *distance student*. In this context, the only thing "distant" about them is their missing presence from a traditional lecture classroom. DE narrows that distance gap by using Technology Mediated Instruction (TMI).

As teaching with technology becomes more prevalent; faculty may begin to question how much actual *face-to-face* classtime they need; more courses will become web-assisted hybrids; teaching technologies will continue to develop; and public schools, particularly resource-challenged rural schools, will continue to move into TMI.

K-14 Market:

The pre-university student market is clearly the largest of all available targets. This includes high school and junior college students, and their teachers. ASU could choose to aggressively target the pre-university market in two broad groups:
1) under-represented and under-served populations to address the *Closing the Gaps* initiative; and,
2) those affected by House Bill 1 (HB1), including students and high school/junior college faculty.

The first of these is a distinct market that would also help ASU achieve and maintain Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) status (not to mention our THECB-mandated success goals). Most of the literature on the low group participation rate of *Hispanics* in higher education points to social values and economic constraints. DE, by itself, is not a magic bullet for attracting this audience. However, it can be viewed as a powerful part of an overall campaign of K-12 outreach and financial aid incentives. The lesson of NSF-funded programs such as *TxCETP* (which includes ASU) and the *Rural Systemic Initiatives* (RSI) is that colleges reach disadvantaged students through their Teacher Education programs, a prime strength of ASU. We can therefore use DE to *close the gaps* by targeting K-12 teachers in districts with a high percentage of traditionally under-served students. At the same time, DE can be used to establish a university presence in the classrooms of K-12 students not normally exposed to the *idea* of higher education.

This same argument can be applied to assisting high schools facing HB1 compliance issues. Dr. Tebeaux visited with Don Allen, a TAMU Professor of Mathematics who is working with a PK-16 committee of the THECB. That committee assesses the readiness of high school students for college math and science. Allen is concerned that the dual credit aspects of HB1 will be a disaster unless the senior colleges reach out to high school and two-year college teachers to prepare them to handle dual credit offerings. His prescription is to target high school teachers and junior college faculty with DE-based math and science programs at the master's level.

ASU could respond directly by preparing dual credit classes for high school students. However, due to the limited payback in terms of formula funding, such an initiative should primarily be viewed as a recruiting tool – not an *in situ* money-making venture. An interesting sidelight to the HB1 discussion was a suggestion that ASU develop an alternative certification program for

people interested in entering the teaching field. The increased HB1 emphasis on math and science requirements will likely lead to additional new hires in the high school teaching ranks; some of whom will likely need a convenient and timely route to certification. DE is well-suited for such situations. For example, Stephen F. Austin State University recently garnered a $500K award from the Department of Education to create a [DE program targeting paraprofessional teacher aides](#) to allow them to complete their degrees and gain certification.

If ASU does choose to venture into the dual credit arena, we would likely focus on academic areas in which we have demonstrated academic superiority. Mathematics for example, is a traditional barrier program that is often poorly taught at high schools and junior colleges. Too many academicians have accepted this situation. What would it take for high school graduates to place directly into College Algebra, Trigonometry, or Analytic Geometry; all of which are freshman-level courses? ASU could remedy this situation with DE programs aimed at raising the level of high school mathematics. Notification of the availability of ASU dual credit should go out to high school principals and counselors with the emphasis on quality. Looking at our own developmental class rosters will define the areas for dual credit emphasis.

Lab science courses for core curriculum credit are another critical dual credit market. Content courses with virtual science labs are a nationwide target market. Science courses directed to non-majors could be marketed as science literacy courses to help non-scientists make sense of what they see and hear regarding science policy. Computer Science is another discipline that high schools often have trouble teaching well. ASU could market these courses by emphasizing that the university is focusing on helping students be ready for college (THECB *readiness focus*) and providing a broad science education, a point discussed by Derek Bok in his book [Our Underachieving Colleges](#).

Another potentially lucrative market is in collaborating with other institutions to plug holes in our respective university curricula. Several electronic consortia have already been formed in Texas to provide specialized coursework locally via DE sharing. Examples include the [Texas Virtual College](#), the Criminal Justice Consortia (UT-Permian Basin, UT-Brownsville, and UT-Austin), the [Texas Electronic Coalition for Physics Education](#) (TAMU-CC, Tarleton, WTAMU, TAMU-K, etc.), and the UT-Austin MPA Consortium.

Military Market:

ASU has a special relationship with military personnel and their families attached to Goodfellow Air Force Base. Although few of these personnel are permanently stationed at Goodfellow, all have the opportunity to establish an academic relationship with ASU while they are here. DE offers the chance to establish such a relationship and, if directed towards specific programs, to continue to offer academic credit via DE long after military students have departed the San Angelo area. Competition with DE existing programs at all military bases is intense and this student market, as a group, is comfortable with the idea of DE and of completing a degree off-campus. In either case, a separate marketing study is called for to develop and deliver products that would be popular in this highly specialized market (e.g. see [Space.edu](#) and their graduate space studies program offered to Air Force personnel).

Degree Completers and Aggregators Market:

Degree completers are individuals who have been sidetracked from an initially traditional academic experience. Many of these students would be classified as "reentry" students. The primary detriment to completing their degrees is usually two-fold: 1) They have tightly constrained work schedules and/or personal obligations which prevent them from returning to a traditional campus setting; and, 2) Their extant college credits have often aged to the point of obsolescence, requiring them to retake courses they may have already completed successfully many years ago. DE is an attractive option for them to complete their degrees, but only with a simultaneous commitment to highly specialized advising and coursework offerings which can build on these student's previous successes. Opening this market would also require changing some policies which serve as roadblocks for degree completers.

A subset of the reentry degree completers market are individuals who have attended multiple institutions; often with multiple majors. The aggregator function would involve ASU deploying some highly talented transcript auditors with the goal of fitting these student's round pegs into the traditional square holes of a normal degree. Then, as with the degree completers, ASU would need to offer specialized capstone coursework to create degree candidates with the intellectual skills we demand of our graduates. The most difficult part of this task may be defining what it is we expect of an ASU graduate. The Task Force could not find an answer for this question.

Continuing Education Market:

Lifelong learning through continuing education (CE) is a niche market separate from academic programs but it is nevertheless important for helping ASU achieve its mission to and goals for community service and outreach. An active CE programs brings people to campus (literally or via DE) and also serves as a recruiting tool. The potential for CE to increase summer enrollments is large.

Any serious DE expansion should begin with presentations to the relevant San Angelo economic development groups. Although our existing CE program is robust, the addition of a DE component could positively change the nature of our professional relationship with the business and civic communities. ASU could also partner in offering professional development programs to companies considering San Angelo; a relationship that could be helpful in attracting new businesses to the area.

Specific CE markets include: nursing, small business tutorials (accounting, business plan creation, marketing, computer systems with vendor demos, launching a new small business, etc), financial management topics for the public including estate planning, personal finance, tax optimization, investment basics, and business and technical writing.

Specialized business groups may warrant their own CE initiatives: real estate, agri-management, or animal science. Hybrid courses in these areas could bring students to campus during the summer for exam proctoring and exposure to ASU.

ASU could also provide virtual enrichment modules to high schools in these subjects as well as other courses, such as history and political science. A source of modules could be the knowledge areas in which students show weaknesses. These students could come to campus for some face-to-face work and see ASU. In return, the University could charge participating school districts a reasonable amount for these modules.

Charge II: How might those courses help ASU increase
its enrollment during summer sessions?

The Task Force recognizes this charge as a subset of the marketing questions above. Summer school students are a specific sub-market with the time and liquid funds to pursue college study outside of the normal nine month academic year. As stated elsewhere, the most lucrative market during any time of the year is graduate students. Summer school is no exception. But summer school is not just about making money. It is also a service provided by ASU to assist students in preparing for the college experience, to reach out to the community, to help students "catch up" after a bad semester, and to help our overachieving students graduate early.

The Task Force believes that summer school can become a more rational experience if the University treats these students as a qualitatively different clientele than students enrolled in the long semesters. Some aspects of that summer market are not being serviced properly by traditional offerings. DE could help address the needs of the following students groups:

- ASU students with summer job-specific time conflicts (e.g. local students with seasonal jobs that conflict with the summer class schedule).

- ASU students with summer residence-specific geographic conflicts (e.g. students who "go home" for the summer and take classes elsewhere).

- high school students from almost anywhere seeking dual-credit prior to graduation.

- incoming freshman who will be starting college in the fall; particularly those slated for developmental classes.

The first two groups would be classified as SCH Leakage from existing students. The second two groups form potentially new markets.

Charge III: What incentives should ASU faculty be
offered to encourage development of online courses?

The majority of faculty concerns about distance education focus on institutional support, workload, and the quality of the distance education courses developed. Conversely, institutional concerns should focus on faculty support for DE, the relative cost of DE class development and delivery, and the projected student learning outcomes arising from TMI. Any incentives packages will have to address all six of these variables: Administrative Support, Workload, Quality, Faculty buy-in, Cost factors, and Student Learning Outcomes

Preparation of a course for on-line delivery is considerably more labor intensive than walking into a classroom with an armful of notes. It is not uncommon for institutions to have fully-staffed TMI or DE technical departments with artists, web designers, HTML, JAVA and PERL programmers, educational media specialists and other dedicated DE professionals. Until and unless ASU is prepared to make such a substantial investment, the *Task Force* will not make immediate recommendations supporting such an infrastructure. The problem is that some faculty, perhaps most, do not have the basic technical expertise to create or maintain such a course. A faculty member who still struggles with e-mail, transferring files via FTP, or submitting a proposal by *FastLane* is not a good candidate for inclusion in this discussion. One of the more interesting anecdotes arising from this conversation was that some faculty may never be able to transition from *the sage on the stage* to *the guide on the side*.

Nevertheless, we do have an extant cadre of faculty and IT professionals capable of preparing effective DE presentations. The remainder of this discussion item is limited to these self-selected techno-literate faculty and staff. These are the individuals with the requisite technical backgrounds to spend their energies focusing on educational delivery systems, not on how to open a web browser.

As with many faculty support items, the first and most important incentive is an institutional commitment valuing their efforts. Properly done, DE should involve a great deal of creative energy. Recognition of those efforts, and the fact that they represent a significant professional development effort, is critical.

Financial incentives will almost certainly begin with funding to support the purchase and maintenance of development and delivery software as well as hardware including fast desktop computers, smart classrooms, and ubiquitous technical support. Technical support must be envisioned in two phases: direct support for course development to the individual faculty members and later, continuing direct support for student access and use issues. This last phase will also include a testing center service.

Incentives for course development can easily be designed into the existing workload credit policies (e.g. Policy 25-III of the ASU Faculty/Staff handbook). However, the development of such policies must proceed with a concomitant effort to clearly define intellectual property questions about the ownership of resulting products. Simply paying direct faculty grants, in which the institution would purchase the developed product with some clearly defined usage rights, might be considered. For example, a faculty member might be paid $5,000 to develop a high volume core curriculum course for DE delivery. Such a package would include recorded audio with streaming video, test banks, a Blackboard interface, and an assessment module. The institution, in turn, might purchase the product with exclusive right to use the package for ASU students, but without any rights to distribute the product to secondary or tertiary markets.

Specific incentives for delivering TMI courses must be developed. Even when dealing with a pre-engineered product, "tweaking" a course in real-time and keeping the material relevant to a specific class requires specialized knowledge. Compensation could be designed into the existing workload policy. Some institutions take this concept a step further by allowing some partial workload credit to the author of a course every time it is offered. This creates an incentive for

both producing and delivering a DE class. Such an incentive further serves to maintain an unambiguous link between the creator and the student consumers.

Any incentive packages must also include a mentoring mechanism that allows technologically illiterate faculty (TIF) to learn, voluntarily, how to participate in DE. A faculty development center or other Faculty Senate-sponsored entity could serve as a valuable link to mentor TIFs. ASU leadership, recognizing the importance of such a development center, has already taken steps to establish such a center. Specifically, the Faculty Senate (FS) noted that ASU, unlike many schools in the state and nation, lacked institutional help for faculty who wanted to improve their teaching and scholarship. Consequently, the FS approved an ad hoc committee (The Committee) that consisted of a diverse group of faculty from each college and faculty cohort. Initially the Committee convinced the members of the ASU Academic Master Plan Committee (AMP) to recognize and include in the September 2005 (AMP) the need for a Center for Instructional Excellence (CIE). The Committee's efforts also led to the submission of a Legislative Appropriations Request to fund The Center. The CIE will also encourage novice faculty and experienced DE instructors to work together in developmental relationships. Formal acknowledgement and recognition of experienced DE faculty for their willingness to share their expertise and experience, along with release time and financial remuneration, could provide both monetary and emotional incentives for faculty to consider entering into a mentoring relationship. Likewise, acknowledgement and release time, with the opportunity to learn new skills, would be an enticement for novice faculty to consider developing and teaching a distance education course. An additional layer in the mentoring relationship would be to allow novice faculty to audit established distance education courses from a seasoned instructor so they could experience the delivery format they are contemplating using in their course(s).

Although labeled as "Charge #3", any future development of DE at ASU rests on the critical issues identified in this section. Increased communication, collaboration, policy development and financial remuneration to the faculty member are major issues that need to be considered when discussing faculty incentives to teach in DE programs. Although it is easy to make a philosophical argument that "DE is just another media," it is a media with an extremely steep learning curve. Using it effectively takes special talents above and beyond what most faculty imagined when they entered the teaching profession.

If we want the DE experience to be one that enriches our primary goals in learning and outreach, we will have to start with a passionate commitment from our most tech-savvy faculty and staff. We will be sending them out on an institutional mission to chart new territories of learning for ASU and perhaps bring back new students from this frontier. There must be no question whatever about our support for their efforts in this arena.

Charge IV: What additional fees should ASU charge for online courses?

As a stopgap measure, a committee appointed to review tuition and fees for the 2007-2009 academic years recommended an interim policy instituting a $50/sch fee for DE courses with the proviso that students enrolled 100% in DE coursework would be exempted from certain internal fees. If a DE student took as little as 1 sch of traditional on-campus credit, the fee waiver would not apply. Such a fee will likely amount to a wash in terms of overall income.

**Charge V: Should ASU consider requiring the successful completion
of at least one online course for graduation?**

The initial reaction of the Task Force to this question was "no". That said, some institutions have instituted requirements for DE coursework. For example, Old Dominion University in Virginia requires that all students take an online course, the apparent intention of this requirement is to prepare students for a workplace that may deliver continuing education online. One suggestion was to create an on-line freshman orientation course (e.g. *Keys to Success in College*) so that students would receive early exposure to DE and, critically, gain some recognition of their own learning styles in a relatively non-threatening environment. Because many freshman students do not do well in the unstructured world of DE; it might be useful for them to gain this knowledge early in their academic careers.

Mandatory DE course completion may be more of an issue to faculty and administrators than it is to our students. They have grown up in a world flooded by ubiquitous on-line content. However, just because they have been exposed to DE-like concepts does not mean that they know how to differentiate between peer-reviewed knowledge and the drivel that permeates their on-line world. A very interesting concept for a mandatory DE course would be one focusing on critical thinking in which students would learn to separate the digital wheat from the chaff.

Charge VI: What are the Best Practices?

A variety of DE articles were reviewed to get a sense of the current recommended *best practices* for DE programs. In general, the recommendations fall into four broad categories:
  – Institutional Context,
  – Faculty Support,
  – Student Support, and
  – Evaluation and Assessment.

Not surprisingly, these categories are aligned with the [THECB Principles of Good Practice](), as well as the [SACS DE Policy Statement]().

Institutional Context:

As Dr. Tebeaux has pointed out, a successful DE program depends on the support of the administration. The institution must be clear on why it is using DE, and these reasons should fit in with the institutional mission. In addition, the DE program should have its own mission statement with supporting goals and objectives.

Successful DE programs at other institutions have established budgets. Studies have shown that programs that depend solely on startup money and grants are rarely able to thrive. Money needs to be allocated in order to maintain technology, provide training and support and possibly even to pay faculty.

Successful DE programs require a coordination of efforts with various entities, including academic departments, technology support, bookstore, and the community. As Dr. Tebeaux suggested, a director at the dean's level can provide the necessary coordination and direction.

Faculty Support:

To have a successful DE program, we must provide adequate technical, design, and production support for the participating faculty. In addition, faculty should have sufficient training in the appropriate use of technology, particularly as they "go live" with new products.

Although we cover incentives for faculty under another topic, most successful DE programs provide incentives. We should only ask faculty who are interested in working with DE and have the technical qualifications to do so. Incentives are one way to ensure faculty participation.

Several studies have shown that DE requires a higher investment in time and effort on the part of faculty, even when compared with courses of comparable size, content, and credit. Some institutions have implemented enrollment caps; others designate online courses as overload.

Policies regarding use of copyrighted material should be clearly stated and enforced. The institution should assist faculty to acquire permission to use copyrighted materials. In addition, ASU must develop a fair policy regarding the ownership of intellectual property for DE. The university and the course developer must agree on the policy before creating course materials.

Student Support:

ASU must commit to continuing DE program/courses long enough for students to complete their courses of study. The financial, administrative and technical resource must remain in place long enough to give all admitted students a chance to finish.

We must ensure that admitted students have the appropriate technology available to access the learning material. More importantly, students must have sufficient motivation and skills to be able to benefit from a DE program.

DE students should have access to appropriate services such as advising, financial aid, and access to grievance procedures. Appropriate library and research services, bookstore services and technical support should be available.

An important part of the educational experience is being a member of a learning community. We should provide for appropriate technologies to enhance communication between DE students and faculty, and other students.

Evaluation And Assessment:

The assessment of student learning as well as the evaluation of the DE program is especially important. We should use the results of these assessments and evaluations to guide curriculum design and program policies in light of emerging technologies and changing student needs.

We should conduct regular student and faculty surveys of overall satisfaction with the DE experience. We should also monitor student portfolios and other capstone projects to verify that program objectives are being met. We are institutionally lucky that the Nursing faculty have already worked out many of the TMI-specific evaluation instruments which can be edited for use in other programs.

Charge VII: What are the effects on Student Life?

Student Life issues, challenges, and opportunities related to DE can be framed in a series of questions: What programs and services should (must) be available to our online learners? How would those programs/services differ from those available to on-campus learners? How will Student Life and other departments at ASU address the needs of online learners? How will Student Life staff support DE programs?

Services to students in DE programs must be of comparable quality to services provided to on-campus learners. DE issues dealing with eligibility and access to programs and services (including scholarships), as well as student development and learning must be addressed. Many student life policies and procedures will have to be reconsidered in light of relevancy and availability to Distance Learners. For example, must a student studying in Japan purchase the ASU Student Insurance?

Student learning and development are central to the curriculum and co-curriculum of any quality higher education institution. Thompson (2006) states that DE programs must provide programs and services that:

> *Encourage students' achievement of purposeful and holistic student learning and development outcomes… intellectual growth, effective communication, realistic self-appraisal, enhanced self-esteem, clarified values, career choices, leadership development, healthy behaviors, meaningful interpersonal relationships, independence, collaboration, social responsibility, satisfying and productive lifestyles, appreciation of diversity, spiritual awareness, and achievement of personal and educational goals.*

Although assessment and identification of the needs of ASU on-line learners must occur as an initial part of our DE program, we should recognize at the outset that there are several functional areas which will be strongly affected by changes in the ASU DE populations:

admissions,	financial aid,
registration,	orientation,
academic advising,	technical support,
career services,	library services,
services for students with disabilities,	financial services,
instructional materials (bookstore),	disciplinary actions,
academic support services,	ID services.

Leadership development, personal counseling, health services, residence life services, wellness programs, student activities, student organizations, committees, recreational, cultural, educational, entertainment events, awards and honors, and promoting identity with the institution

are suggested as secondary programs and services that may be provided at a later date. Every ASU student is eligible for each of the primary and secondary services listed above, regardless of where they take classes, as long as they have paid the required fees. We must examine which programs and services are only available on the main campus, and ascertain what (if any) modifications we need to make for all DE students to access those programs and services.

Some responses may be as simple as using CART (Computer Assisted Real-time Transcriptions) of disciplinary hearings and committee meetings, or Audiovisual clips of symposium speakers. Providing learner-paced DE versions of leadership workshops and time management seminars would also meet some of the DE students' special needs. IT should likely develop specialized DE web portals with links to critical information, e-mail links, and real-time chats with other online students.

Some specific questions were raised in *Task Force* meetings, including:

Should DE students be eligible for all Financial Aid programs, including scholarships? Yes, as long as they meet the requirements for such programs and scholarships.

Should DE students be exempt from some on-campus fees? Yes, the Health fee, Recreation fee, and University Center fees require students to be present in San Angelo in order to utilize those services. Although the websites and staff could provide information and suggested resources to a DE student, medical staff cannot diagnose and prescribe treatment without physical examinations. Real time video technology has not expanded to the extent that allows counselors to provide therapeutic assistance to students not physically present. Although some states do allow "E-mail therapy", counseling and psychological associations and licensing boards do not regard such "therapy" as an acceptable practice. The Recreation program is site-bound because of the nature of the facilities and equipment, as well as the staffing for individual and team sports and programs. Similarly, the UC Fee funds programs (UCPC) and facilities (Lake House, SuperSlab, UC) which require students to be physically present. If programs available through Student Involvement (i.e. Leadership development, multicultural studies, student organizations, etc.), become available to all DE students, a special programming fee may be instituted. The Student Services Fee raises special concerns. ASU bases this fee on student credit hours and many, but not all, of the programs and services (as well as scholarships) require the student to be present on the main campus for utilization. Texas state law also mandates the Student Services Fee. We need to study this area to ascertain whether this Student Services Fee should be charged to DE students.

Should ASU allow DE students to live in campus residence facilities? Yes, but they must be full time students. DE students should also be exempt from the on-campus residency requirement.

In summary, we should afford Distance Education students a holistic education with the same quality of curricular and co-curricular opportunities available to on-campus students.

Charge VIII: How should we market DE offerings?

Effective marketing can be expensive. For dual credit opportunities, we should we could contact high school counselors in schools that send students to ASU. For DE program opportunities, we should submit short articles to professional journals, such as those for science and math teachers. For Continuing Education opportunities, we should place advertisements in area newspapers with listings of all courses offered in a given month. TAMU (College Station) has reported good responses from local radio station advertisements and from announcements on the PBS station in Houston. Another good outlet is the *San Antonio Business Journal*. People who recommend an institutional marketing strategy for promoting and populating on-line courses need to be aware of the types of students attracted to such courses. Based on the three-semester experience (2005-2006) the English department has had with an on-line freshman composition course, there are specific student groups enrolling in on-line coursework:
1. Students who did not realize they were enrolling in an on-line course;
2. Students who enrolled intentionally in an on-line course in the belief that such a course was "easier" than a traditional, face-to-face composition course;
3. Students who enrolled intentionally in an on-line course in the belief that such a course was the same as a "correspondence course;"
4. Students who enrolled intentionally in an on-line course as part of a larger sequence of on-line courses (e.g., College of Nursing students).

The majority of students enrolled in the online composition course since the fall of 2005 fall into groups 1-3. This population does not reflect the criteria for success in on-line courses taken from the following texts on on-line course development and assessment:

1. Bender, Tisha. *Discussion-Based Online Teaching to Enhance Student Learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2003.
2. French, Deanie, et al, eds. *Internet [Based] Learning: An Introduction and Framework for Higher Education and Business*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 1999.
3. Salmon, Gilly. *E-Moderating: The Key to Teaching & Learning Online*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge Falmer, 2004.

The criteria for success taken from these texts are:

- Students who are successful participants in on-line courses bring to these courses such abilities as using life experiences to (re-)build categories of knowledge.

- Students who are successful participants in on-line courses approach learning out of a desire to solve problems in daily life.

- Students who are successful participants in on-line courses have internal or external sources of motivation.

- Students who are successful participants in on-line courses rely on negative learning experiences in the past to strengthen their motivation.

- Students who are successful participants in on-line courses have clear senses of the educational goals and objectives they wish to pursue.

- Students who are successful participants in on-line courses use their own and others' prior knowledge as the important source of information for hypothesis formation and testing.

The most important factor in what a student learns is often what that student already knows. The traditional classroom emphasizes the instructor's presence to guide and inform students about what "old" knowledge should be used and when.

Because the on-line course uses interactive approaches to learning in which that instructor's guiding presence is absent, successful on-line students must act as co-constructors of knowledge by drawing upon both individual and collective knowledge.

Successful on-line students are diverse in their learning styles, having different preferences in terms of the means and media through which they learn.

Successful on-line students access a variety of means of representation of information as well as opportunities for active learning, working both alone and in teams.

Preliminary Marketing Conclusion:

Any marketing plan for on-line courses needs to focus on students demonstrating the listed characteristics. Typically, these would be students from Group 4.

Develop online/hybrid graduate courses and modules for high school teachers. ASU could deliver these courses as continuing education or as academic credit. Graduate certificates—three or four courses--encourage teachers to "try" graduate work.

Charge IX: Addressing SACS criteria

SACS policy states that faculty should assume responsibility for the rigor of the programs and the quality of instruction. The institution (through a DE director) can provide rubrics and checklists for faculty to use to ensure their DE courses meet expectations. QualityMatters.org offers such rubrics and checklists for planning and evaluating online courses. McLennan used such checklists to show how faculty and administrators can objectively measure the quality of their online courses.

We must also maintain the currency of the material. It should be recognized that a course cannot simply be recycled from semester to semester – resources must be provided to maintain and

update materials, programs, and courses. Ultimately, academically qualified professionals should make decisions about curriculum based on program objectives and student learning outcomes.

SACS requires that all programs have specific outcomes. In preparation for the new SACS reaffirmation procedures it makes sense to link all new DE offerings to our local SACS Assessment pages with semester by semester results tabulated. Assessment of externally-accredited programs (such as Nursing) is potentially very different. Existing web links for those program criteria should be linked to our own SACS assessment pages.

Lastly, it is clear to the Task force that an overall DE initiative could serve as the basis for a powerful Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) in preparation for next SACS reaffirmation process.

Reporting Course Outcomes:

Course syllabi must include specific learning outcomes for the course as well as explanations of how these outcomes will be determined. In short, students should know WHAT they are going to learn, HOW they are going to learn, and HOW instructors will measure their learning. This requirement should apply to all courses, resident or distant. Specific assessment/ and assessment methods will vary by course.

Students should provide feedback to the assessment pages on their own perceived relationship between the course objectives, student learning outcomes, assignments as a means of helping students achieve the learning outcomes, and grading that measures how well the student has achieved the outcome.

IDEA evaluations may be included if they address relevant questions: course objectives and learning outcomes were clear; assignments led to the learning outcomes and course and the grading of assignments helped students understand if they actually achieved the learning outcome.

Overview of Task Force Charges:

- o Faculty involved in online instruction must have support from all levels.
- o ASU needs to offer "pure" on-line courses for targeted CE audiences.
- o Faculty and students involved with online instructions need to have dedicated technological support.
- o ASU must ensure *quality* of on-line instruction.
- o On-line courses must meet the same rigor/standards of traditional course delivery.
- o ASU needs to reassert our relationship with our own students.
- o ASU needs to provide on-line instruction that will be an option to courses offered by entities such as the Texas Virtual College, etc.
- o ASU should consider the Nursing Department's experiences with implementation of online programs as models to build on.
- o Courses listed in the ASU schedule as "DE" must conform to a uniform set of standards. Web-assisted courses should never be offered or advertised as "DE".
- o Some extant ASU policies will have to be changed to meet our DE implementation goals.

Recommendations:

Any major new initiative, including *Distance Education*, must be viewed through the lens of SACS Principles of Accreditation, the SACS DE Policy, and the published Mission of Angelo State University. The first and most important recommendation is to create a policy writing committee to build new and revised policies which will facilitate the remainder of the material in this section. In addition to the specific recommendations which appear below, the Task Force has opted to include a verbatim copy of the report we received from Dr. Elizabeth Tebeaux of Texas A&M. This item is included as Appendix B starting on page 28.

Data Acquisition Recommendation: Currently, no organized efforts to identify swirling or SCH Leakage exist at Angelo State University. However, a Spring 2006 transcript audit showed that just over 2,700, or about 45% of ASU students had imported some sort of transfer work to apply to their locally-awarded degrees. Jeff Sefcik is currently working on splitting out these numbers to try to identify ASU students importing DE work from other institutions.

Residency and Correspondence Recommendations: The ASU catalog language on correspondence work (page 146 of 2005-2007 Bulletin), should be changed. The policy currently allows up to 30-hours of "extension and correspondence work". This is entirely too much. In addition, the existing residency requirement (only 30 hours of credit must be taken at ASU) should be changed to the "last 30 hours in residence" with an exception for active duty military and their immediate families. Change all references to correspondence work to a more generic term including DE/TMI.

Grade Replacement Recommendation: Change the grade replacement policy so that only an exact ASU class can replace an exact ASU grade. We should not be using Howard College or DE-based grades to replace poor marks earned in ASU classes.

Faculty Advertising Recommendation: Effective immediately, all advertisements for new or replacement faculty lines should include the statement "Preference will be given to candidate with experience in Distance Education".

Quality Recommendation: There is no specific mechanism to ensure the quality of what is actually delivered by DE or TMI. Students may tolerate antiquated faculty in a traditional classroom setting, but they are likely to be less forgiving in an on-line scenario. The ASU Institutional Plan on DE does include oversight on the creation of programs, but there is no organized plan for mentoring, assessing, or supporting the technology-specific pedagogical aspects of TMI offerings. If DE offerings and the number of faculty involved are to be expanded, there should be a formal mentoring and training plan (including rubrics) implemented under the auspices of the Faculty Senate or alternatively, a Director of DE. All courses listed as "DE" should abide by a uniform set of standards including hours of instruction, exam proctoring, and student participation.

Intellectual Property Recommendation: ASU and the TSUS should actively prepare a systemwide policy on the intellectual property issues associated with the creation of DE products including but not limited to the sharing of DE resources within system components.

Scheduling Recommendation: Begin an institutional campaign to identify and respond to the factors encouraging our students to take classes elsewhere, particularly those involving class scheduling and availability issues.

Marketing Recommendation #1: create a means of strict fiscal oversight for any proposed DE offering to ensure that the cost:benefit ratio associated with the offering is completely transparent.

Marketing Recommendation #2: Utilize DE as a recruiting tool for pre-college, military, and other non-traditional students who would not otherwise be participating in higher education.

Marketing Recommendation #3: Pursue the potentially lucrative leadership role available for degree aggregation. ASU may wish to pursue this role within the context of the TSUS.

Physical Plant Recommendation #1: Ensure that all DE classes are assigned to and originate from a classroom, lab, studio, or other recognizable ASU teaching facility. It is too easy to imagine the informality of the DE experience devolving into a free-for-all by the faculty and their students. Regardless of discipline, the formal learning process requires a formal setting, particularly for novice students. Such facilities may be real or virtual.

Physical Plant Recommendation #2: Any serious expansion of DE programs at ASU will require dedication of significant bandwidth and the associated routers, servers and other physical IT equipment. Similarly, the number of high bandwidth classrooms capable of real-time two-way communications should be expanded to ensure convenient access from multiple campus locations.

Student Life Recommendation #1: Form a small Distance Learning Implementation Team with representatives from the faculty senate, staff senate, student senate, and each of the academic, technology, student life, and fiscal areas. An Associate Vice President or Dean should direct the team, and have the authority to submit recommendations on policy changes directly to the President's Cabinet to expedite the process and allow for easy and timely adoption, deletion, adaptation and/or change of current policies to meet DE needs.

Student Life Recommendation #2: Ensure that the primary functional/administrative areas listed on page 19 are available to all DE students. Further, ASU should make available some sort of "Are you ready for DE?" assessment instrument for all students (AKA the *Digital Driver's License*).

Student Life Recommendation #3: In conjunction with the appropriate functional/administrative areas and the Distance Learning Implementation Team, the Dean of Student Life should form prioritized lists of additional programs and services to be included for Distance Education students, along with a timeline for review, recommendations (including resources), and implementation. These lists will ensure intentional review of programs and services and allow for timely inclusion, modification, or deletion of those programs and services.

Appendix A: Primary Reference Links

As part of the review process described in this document, members of the Task Force reviewed numerous documents. While not intended to be all-inclusive, the following links represent important background information which guided some or all aspects of our study.

Benchmarks for Success in DE This document was produced by the Institute for Higher Education Policy and sponsored by the NEA and Blackboard Inc. Written in 2000, it still is a useful document for understanding how to measure the success of a DE program.

Briefing Book on House Bill 1 Excerpts on new legislative initiatives including requirements for four years of math, science, and social studies.

Building Blocks Overview of legislative intent on DE from the Fiscal Notes newsletter of the Texas Comptroller dated September 2006.

Distance Education Clearinghouse A comprehensive site that collects distance ed info from a wide variety of sources. Check out the 'Other Distance Ed sites' page for more web sites.

National Center for Academic Transformation Non-profit group dedicated to the effective use of Information Technology to improve student learning outcomes and reduce the cost of higher education

Quality Matters Inter-institutional quality assurance in online learning.

Sloan Consortium Sloan-C is a consortium of institutions and organizations committed to Quality Online Education.

Texas Distance Education Web site referred to in the 'Building Blocks' article. An information center for DE programs offered by Texas institutions.

Distance Education Policy Statement SACS definition of DE and overview of SACS DE criteria.

Is DE more work or less? http://www.ajde.com/Contents/vol14_3.htm#editorial

What Does it Mean to be a Distance Teacher?
http://www.ajde.com/Contents/vol15_2.htm#editorial

DE has evolved: http://www.ajde.com/Contents/vol12_1.htm#editorial

American J. of Distance Education: http://www.ajde.com/index.htm

Intl Journal of Distance Learning: http://www.itdl.org/index.htm

Intl. J. of Educational Telecommunication: http://www.aace.org/pubs/ijet/default.htm

Other References:

Bender, Tisha. *Discussion-Based Online Teaching to Enhance Student Learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2003.

French, Deanie, et al, eds. *Internet [Based] Learning: An Introduction and Framework for Higher Education and Business*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 1999.

Institutional Plan for Distance Learning and Off-Campus Instruction 2002-2007, Version 2002.1. unpublished document Angelo State University, San Angelo, TX.

Salmon, Gilly. *E-Moderating: The Key to Teaching & Learning Online*, 2nded. New York: Routledge Falmer, 2004.

Schwitzer, A.M., Ancis, J. R., & Brown, N. (2001). *Promoting Student Learning and Development at a Distance*. Washington, D.C.: American College Personnel Association.

Stephens- Graves, Deidre (2006). *Impact of Extra-curricular E-Communities on Distance Learning*. Program presented at Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel Administrators: Austin, TX.

Strange, C. C., & Banning, J. H. (2001). *Educating By Design: Creating Campus Learning Environments That Work*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Thompson, N. (2006). CAS Standards and Guidelines for Distance Education. In *Council for the Advancement of Professional Standards For Higher Education, Sixth Edition*. Washington, D.C.: Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education.

Appendix B: *Friend-of-the Task-Force Brief* **by Dr. Elizabeth Tebeaux:**

1. Establish an Office of E-Learning.

Establishing an Office of E-Learning will enable the university to move carefully but purposely and steadily in this area. The office does not have to be more than one person + the Continuing Education person. As I will explain, offering CE in TMI format can create a new market for ASU courses and a new revenue stream to the university.

The person in charge of E-Learning should report directly to the Provost and be a member of the Council of Deans. This person needs to have access to deans and department heads and know "what's going on" at ASU.

This position does not have to be permanent. ASU could appoint an E-Learning director for five years, a period long enough to ensure that we launch and evaluate the TMI initiative. At that point, ASU can decide whether to do the following: make the position permanent, giving the position a Dean's line or an Assistant Provost's title. Given the speed of change, keeping flexibility in the position is critical. However, we cannot effectively achieve the launching of a full-fledged TMI program "off the corner of someone's desk." TAMU, for example, tried this tactic and found that it did not work.

We should not launch this position unless ASU decides it wants to move into the TMI market. Office support can come from the Provost's office. TMI will need *minimal* support expenses [How do we operationalize "minimal"?]. The person in this position serves as a facilitator who works full time to ensure that TMI program/course objectives move ahead as planned.

2. Prepare the campus for TMI program development.

The E-Learning Director should meet all academic personnel interested in teaching with technology, deans, department heads, and technology-oriented faculty. Goal: find out WHO wants to do WHAT, the level of technological expertise faculty have. The Director should meet regularly with the CIO to find out the level of technology support needed.

The rationale for TMI offerings should be determined and discussed. We should not develop programs that do not have markets. We should continue the TMI proposal development/approval process outlined in the current ASU DE plan. The E-Learning Director should work with all departments/faculty who want to develop a TMI program.

IMPORTANT: Everyone involved in the TMI effort should be aware of grant opportunities from both the State and the Federal government. Support for outreach efforts via technology, those that mesh with ASU's interest and capability, can help fund development. Kit Blount can be extremely helpful in pursuing and writing grants.

We should develop an assessment process for TMI courses. This process should fit within the existing institutional effectiveness method. We cannot treat TMI courses differently from

resident courses. ASU should compare the completion rate of courses/ performance between traditional and TMI courses every semester . TMI and resident courses should have the same content. Programs should have learning objectives, and courses within programs should have learning objectives that stated in course syllabi, along with how the instructor will measure the objectives. These requirements conform to SACS requirements.

Instructors should modify the IDEA system, if necessary, to include questions about student learning:
- Did the course materials and assignments reflect the goals of the course?
- Did they help students achieve the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus?
- Does the student believe he/she achieved the course objectives and the learning outcomes?
- What recommendations does the student have for improving the course to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes?

The Director should then prepare a position paper with additional input from administration and the faculty senate. Goal: to establish goals for the Office of E-Learning and a start-up plan that covers three years. The administration, participating faculty, and the CIO should support this position paper and plan.

ASU should establish a DE committee, composed of faculty, professionals from student services, fiscal, the library, faculty senate, continuing education, information technology, and others to monitor all activities. This committee should remain intact for the three-year launching period. The Director of E-Learning will chair the committee. The committee should meet regularly to ensure that issues that arise are resolved.

We need to define the financial side of E-learning as soon as possible. What will students pay for TMI courses? How will we charge truly distant students? Can we use some of the DE fee money to expand the current technology support center?

Doug Fox, or another cognizant individual should develop a coding system for DE to ensure that students can be appropriately charged, once prices are determined. Suggestion: Dollars added to any course in which technology delivery makes up 75% of the course. A separate price for students who take courses offered completely at a distance should be determined.

Faculty support/incentives should be determined—a course load reduction during the semester before an instructor launches a new TMI course; small grants during the summer before launching a TMI course in the fall. Money coming from student fees can help to provide funding.

After we target programs for TMI delivery, we should advertise the program(s) and the launch date. DE marketing can be included in ASU's existing marketing effort.

We need to ensure that we appropriately staff the *Multimedia Support Center/the e-Learning Center* to assist faculty with web-course development and other tools.

An update to ASU's DE plan should reflect the changes given in the position paper. All colleges will be resubmitting their DE plans every five years. Thus, ASU needs to update the current plan that expires in 2007.

The Director should begin immediately to work with faculty on course design and all required elements—accessibility, learning, syllabi development, assessment.

We need to develop an E-Learning website to cover both TMI courses and continuing education. The DE website should include links to financial aid, student services, student billing, the library, the MISC, and the bookstore. If possible, we should create an online bookstore. In addition to DE faculty, Student Services may want to provide online advising for truly distant students.

The director should begin working immediately with the CE person to look for opportunities to offer CE by DE and by a hybrid format. These courses should be on the website. ASU should pursue online registration/payment for CE for ease and efficiency.

The Director should also begin to make visits around San Angelo, along with faculty from appropriate departments, to launch needs assessment. The CE person should also be involved with these visits.

2. Prepare faculty.

We should develop and use a series of heuristic check-sheets to help faculty include elements in their TMI courses that are required by the THECB and SACS. The Director should offer workshops to faculty in departments/colleges who are preparing TMI courses. Faculty should file these check-sheets with the department offices and the Office of E-Learning.

The Office of E-Learning should support departmental and faculty efforts to ensure that development of TMI programs proceed as rapidly as possible.

The Office of E-Learning should host a number of technology "show and tell" workshops to demonstrate how to use various technologies. These kinds of workshops give faculty across the university ideas on how to possibly use technology in their courses.

3. Assess progress.

At the end of each academic year, the E-Learning Director, the DE Committee, and the Provost should have a retreat to discuss the year's events and to refine goals for the next year.

Concluding Observation

The TMI program should be consider a part of the university's academic mission, not a fringe operation. Faculty should know that they are as critical to the education process, as it uses technology, as they were when residential, seat-based courses were the norm. Again, support from the ASU administration, deans, and department heads is critical.

ANGELO STATE UNIVERSITY

San Angelo, Texas

INSTITUTIONAL PLAN FOR DISTANCE LEARNING AND OFF-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION 2002-2007

VERSION 2002.1

A Member of The Texas State University System

Table of Contents

Angelo State University
Institutional Plan for Distance Learning
and Off-Campus Instruction, Version 2002.1
2002-2007

Part 1. Introduction

As part of its ongoing efforts to provide quality distance education programs and courses to students across the state of Texas and beyond, Angelo State University has developed its Institutional Plan for Distance Learning and Off-Campus Instruction. The plan serves as both benchmark and guide for ASU's distance education program. It was generated through the collective efforts of the Distance Learning Committee, a representative campus body with broad-based participation as highlighted below.

Ms. Elaine Beach Information Technology
Dr. Richard Beck, Chair Center for Academic Excellence
Dr. Carol Diminnie Graduate School
Dr. Maurice Fortin Porter Henderson Library
Mr. Doug Fox Information Technology
Dr. Deborrah Hebert Student Life
Ms. Mitzie Keeling Admissions
Maj. Darcy Maloney Department of Aerospace Studies
Dr. John Miazga School of Education
Dr. Edward Russell Department of Nursing
Dr. June Smith Department of Communications, Drama, and Journalism

The plan was reviewed by the Council of Deans, the Council of Deans and Department Heads, and the Administrative Council prior to receiving final approval. It is updated every five years and serves as a reference for the institution's submissions to other state and federally recognized accrediting and credentialing agencies.

Part 2A. Degree and Certificate Programs Exported Via Distance Education and Off-Campus Delivery

Program Name and Degree Designation	Program CIP Code	Credit [C] or Non-Credit [NC]	Current [C] or Next Year [NY] Program	Percent Delivered by Distance or Off-Campus Education	Type of Delivery	Delivered Where and to Individuals [I] or Groups [G]
BS in Nursing	51.1601.00	C	C	48	Internet	Computers [I]

Distance Education is defined in CB Rules 5.152 as: Instruction in which the majority of the instruction occurs when the student and instructor are not in the same physical setting. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous to any single or multiple location(s): (A) Other than the "main campus" of a senior institution (or "on campus"), where the primary office of the chief executive officer of the campus is located; (B) Outside the boundaries of the taxing authority of a community/junior college district; or (C) Via instructional telecommunications to any other distant location, including electronic delivery of all types.

Off-campus Education is defined as: Instruction in which one-half or more of the instruction is delivered with the instructor and student in the same physical location and which meets one of the following criteria: for senior institutions, Lamar state colleges, or public technical colleges, off-campus locations are locations away from the main campus; for public community/junior colleges, off-campus locations are locations outside the taxing district.

Part 2B. Degree and Certificate Programs Imported Via Distance Education and Off-Campus Delivery

Program Name and Degree Designation	Program CIP Code	Credit [C] or Non-Credit [NC]	Current [C] or Next Year [NY] Program	Percent Delivered by Distance or Off Campus Education	Type of Delivery	Received From
Not Applicable						

Distance Education is defined in CB Rules 5.152 as: Instruction in which the majority of the instruction occurs when the student and instructor are not in the same physical setting. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous to any single or multiple location(s): (A) Other than the "main campus" of a senior institution (or "on campus"), where the primary office of the chief executive officer of the campus is located; (B) Outside the boundaries of the taxing authority of a community/junior college district; or (C) Via instructional telecommunications to any other distant location, including electronic delivery of all types.

Off-campus Education is defined as: Instruction in which one-half or more of the instruction is delivered with the instructor and student in the same physical location and which meets one of the following criteria: for senior institutions, Lamar state colleges, or public technical colleges, off-campus locations are locations away from the main campus; for public community/junior colleges, off-campus locations are locations outside the taxing district.

Part 3. Institutional Plan

Section 1. Institutional Issues

1. (YES) The institution documents compliance with The Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Offered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs.

Angelo State University (ASU) hereby affirms that it is in compliance with The Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Offered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs as stated in the attached memorandum from the Vice President for Academic Affairs (Appendix Item A). Additionally, as of June 2002, each distance education course proposal will include a completed Checklist for Incorporating the Principles of Good Practice into Electronically-Based Courses, which will verify and document compliance. Documentation will be archived in the Office of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.

2. (YES) Distance education is consistent with the institution's educational mission.

"Both traditional and technological learning resources are utilized in instruction and research and to provide special services and programs of continuing education and distance education, which contribute to the cultural and economic welfare of the region served by the University." ASU Mission Statement

ASU's web-based Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program and Master of Science in Nursing courses play a primary role in fulfilling this portion of the institutional mission, specifically by addressing the needs of nontraditional students through distance education.

3. (YES) The institution has an assessment process for evaluating the rationale behind the proposal of complete degree and certificate programs for delivery via distance education.

A number of factors have influenced the scope and direction of ASU's distance education program. The institution ran its first needs assessment in 1995, which resulted in the identification of certain types of classes, particularly professional (graduate) and continuing education classes that had a distance education market in the fifteen county area surrounding San Angelo. In 1997, the University of Texas of the Permian Basin requested that ASU consider an exchange of courses in criminal justice and public administration. In the same year, Stamford Independent School District requested that graduate course work be offered by ASU for teachers in the surrounding school districts. During the 1998 fall semester and following a regional needs assessment, the Nursing Department test marketed an upper-division nursing course that ultimately led to the online BSN.

In all instances, the department head is the first to evaluate the validity of the rationale for the

proposed program. If approved, the proposal filters through the college or school dean to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, who oversees distance education at ASU. Once approved, the proposal is forwarded to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who then reviews it with the President. Typically, independent confirmation is sought from students, faculty, administrators, and employers as to the need for and the projected viability of the proposed program. Upon approval of the President, programs are subject to curricular development and approval procedures as outlined in section 2, item 1 of this document.

4. (YES) The institution evaluates the overall effectiveness of its distance education program by assessing progress toward meeting its institutional goals. The evaluation outcomes are incorporated into the institution's overall institutional effectiveness efforts.

Elements of the institution's traditional and technological learning resources have been melded to provide programs in distance education that contribute to the economic welfare of the region. Through its Institutional Effectiveness process, ASU monitors programmatic outcomes and their associated impact on institutional mission and goals. Programs, such as the online BSN, typically track course completion, state licensure examination rates, job placement rates, and employer satisfaction. Outcomes of these assessments are furnished to the Institutional Effectiveness Oversight Committee and subsequently compiled in the Annual Report on Institutional Effectiveness. The President reviews the findings with each of the vice presidents, and they in turn review the findings with their constituent programs. Opportunities for the overall advancement of the institution are identified, corresponding institutional effectiveness plans are developed, and the cycle of Institutional Effectiveness begins anew.

5. (YES) The institution has an officer responsible for distance learning in a position that is appropriate for the institution and the size of the distance education program.

The Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA) is the officer responsible for the distance education program at ASU. The AVPAA reports directly to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and has line responsibility for the Center for Academic Excellence. Distance education responsibilities are well placed in that the AVPAA is heavily involved in matters relating to curriculum, budget, technology, retention, and academic excellence. The AVPAA is a member of the Administrative Council, the Advising Committee, the Budget Committee, the Deans Council, the Deans and Department Heads Council, the Distance Education Committee, the Retention Committee, the University Curriculum Committee, and the University Technology Committee. Given the scope of activities of these various committees, the AVPAA is well informed and uniquely positioned to provide leadership over the many facets inherent in distance education.

A recent restructuring has also brought the area of Student Life under the Office of Academic Affairs, thereby facilitating the amalgamation of academic affairs and student affairs. It is anticipated that this restructuring will increase the level of service for all ASU students,

including those involved in distance education.

6. (YES) The institution has established requirements for admissions, satisfactory student progress, and graduation requirements for distance education.

Admission criteria, satisfactory student progress expectations, and graduation requirements are the same for distance education and on-campus students. The BSN online completion program is the only currently active distance education program at ASU (although the MSN program offers one online distance education course per semester, it is not an online program). Admission criteria, course requirements, syllabi, clinical practicum instruction, and requirements for satisfactory student progress and for graduation are outlined in the Bachelors of Science in Nursing Student Handbook, which is readily available to students via the web. (Appendix Item B)
http://www.angelo.edu/dept/nursing/bsn/bsnhandbook%20.pdf

7. (YES) Policies relevant to transcripting, grading, and transfer credentials are in place.

General statements and corresponding policies relevant to transcripting, grading, and transfer credentials are included in the Angelo State University Bulletin, which is available to student in print form through the Office of Admissions or in electronic form via the ASU web site. These statements and policies are equally applicable to distance education students and on-campus students. ASU transcripts do not differentiate between courses earned on-campus and courses earned via distance education.
http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/university_catalog_2001.htm

8. (YES) The institution has a process in place to address the needs of distance learners who fall under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination by the University, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Distance education students with a documented disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, may contact the Office of the Associate Dean of Student Life. To the extent possible, the faculty and administration will make a reasonable accommodation to assist qualified disabled individuals in meeting their degree requirements. The office is accessible by e-mail, phone and/or the disability services portion of the ASU web site.
http://www.angelo.edu/services/student_life/disability_services.htm

9. (YES) SACS and other professional credentialing agencies have been notified, as appropriate.

On July 21, 1998, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) was notified by Angelo State University of a substantive change in technology-based instruction. In its reply, SACS found that given the limited scope of ASU's activities, no further action would be required until the institution offered 50% or more of the credits in an educational program via distance learning. On July 29, 2001, and in advance of its on-site reaccreditation visit, SACS was notified by ASU that forty-eight percent of the BSN program was offered online. SACS, in its reply, reiterated the need to complete a substantive change once the threshold had been crossed.

The National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) has accredited the online BSN and MSN programs through fall 2007 and fall 2004 respectively.

10. (YES) The institution has sufficient financial resources to initiate and sustain quality distance learning courses and programs, and the support services that accompany them, and a process by which funding is distributed to support distance education.

To provide financial assistance to faculty members who are interested in developing distance education courses, ASU offers funding through its Technology Development Grant Program and Faculty Development and Enrichment Program. These programs are annually funded at $40,000 and $50,000 respectively. Faculty members who have been funded through these programs typically receive a one or two course load release during the summer and financial assistance to cover associated professional development expenditures.

It is the responsibility of the associated academic and support service departments to request sufficient funds to support quality distance education offerings. Through an annual budget process that is linked to institutional effectiveness, departments receive education and general (E&G) support from both state and local funds. The bulk of the technological infrastructure is supported through Higher Education Assistance Fund (HEAF) allocations.

Given the relatively small size of the ASU distance education program, funding is sufficient to maintain current operations. However, should the program be slated for growth, additional sources of revenue would be necessary. It is anticipated that a distance education fee would be instituted in support thereof.

Section 2. Educational Programs

1. (YES) The institution has procedures in place for planning, development, approval and review of quality distance education programs; and for meeting external accrediting bodies standards.

As with all matters pertaining to curriculum planning, development, approval and review, the

processes at ASU are rigorous. Proposed distance education programs are planned and developed by the faculty in consultation with their peers, the administration, and appropriate accrediting agencies. Completed proposals are delivered to the department head for approval and then forwarded to the college or school dean as appropriate. Upon receipt the dean will forward the proposal for a distance education program to the college or school curriculum committee. After review by the committee, the proposal is sent to the dean for approval. The proposal then is forwarded to the university curriculum committee for approval. The Registrar then reviews and forwards distance education programs to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Once approved by the Vice President and President, distance education programs are then forwarded to the Board of Regents of The Texas State University System for review. Upon approval, the distance education programs are submitted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and ultimately to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and/or other accrediting bodies as appropriate.

ASU's method for the assessment of distance education offerings is multifaceted. Course instruction is assessed via the online version of the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction. Use of this instrument has allowed the Nursing Department to include an additional ten online-specific questions that cover overall student satisfaction with their distance education experience. Based on evaluative feedback, curricular improvements have been implemented in NUR 3601 and 4602, which included a modification of student project requirements; and in NUR 4302, which included a modification from a non-clinical to a clinical format.

Since 1997, the University has completed annual cycles of planning and reporting via a web-based institutional effectiveness system. All departments are required to submit two documents: a plan that outlines the department's connection to the mission statement and the objectives it wants to achieve, along with two separate means of assessing each objective; and a report that lists the results of the assessment and how these results will be used to improve unit quality. The departments submit their reports to the Institutional Effectiveness Oversight Committee, which then provides suggestions to each department and presents an annual report on overall institutional effectiveness to the President.

In the 2001 fall semester, ASU implemented the process of programmatic review, the primary purpose of which is to examine such factors essential to the improvement of academic programs, as measured by the quality of the faculty, student learning, library and other educational resources, the curriculum, and available facilities. Program review is closely linked to institutional mission, effectiveness, planning, and budgeting. Through an examination of programmatic strengths and weaknesses, plans are developed, implemented, assessed, and renewed to support a campus culture of continuous quality improvement. Departments undergoing review will address their distance learning components as appropriate.

2. (YES) The institution has plans/procedures for assessing student learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction in its distance education programs and courses; and for using the results of the assessment to improve courses and programs.

The Policy and Procedure Guide for Institutional Effectiveness, developed in 1998, outlines the guidelines for developing and submitting institutional effectiveness plans and reports. Each academic unit must have a purpose statement and three to five objectives statements addressing quality of education. These are assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively, and at least one means of assessment must rely on student performance.

The BSN program, with the assistance of the Office of Institutional Planning, Research, and Assessment, has assessed three student learning outcomes. 87.5% of BSN graduates had found employment at the time the survey was completed. Employers had rated BSN graduates between "above average" and "well above average" in the level of competency and professionalism displayed. 63% of BSN graduates had supported professional nursing associations and were active at the state, regional, and national levels. Each of these student learning outcomes exceeded the established benchmark. It is anticipated that the assessments performed by the BSN program will serve as a model and template for future distance education programs.

As with on-campus programs, student retention in the distance education program is tracked by the academic department. Semester by semester, course enrollments are monitored by the department head as cohorts progress through the program. Significant levels of attrition are noted and steps are taken to address any discrepancies.

Student satisfaction with their distance education program has been tracked through the use of the IDEA Rating of Student Instruction. This instrument allows for the inclusion of questions to assess student satisfaction. A representative sample of these questions and a composite average of student responses have been included as Appendix Item C. Overall student satisfaction in the online BSN has been very positive.

Results of these assessments have led to a number of curricular changes in the online BSN program including a reapportioning of the practicum and lecture components in NUR 3301, 3303, and 4302. Additionally, the Department has chosen to use the HESI exam over the NLN CAT exam, as it is more reflective of programmatic goals.

3. (YES) Explain procedures that are in place to evaluate all instructional materials developed by other organizations or institutions prior to use in distance education.

ASU faculty members have developed all courses delivered via distance education. All associated media and textbooks used in the program have been reviewed by the faculty, usually by committee, prior to purchase and implementation. This process is mirrored in the development of on-campus courses.

Section 3. Faculty

1. (YES) The qualifications for distance education faculty are the same as faculty teaching the same courses in a traditional on-campus format.

Distance education faculty qualifications are the same as for on-campus instructors. In the case of those faculty members involved in the delivery of the online BSN, there are no exceptions to ASU's required qualifications, which meet SACS and THECB guidelines.

2. (YES) The institution provides orientation and training for faculty involved in distance education programs.

Faculty members interested in developing and teaching distance education courses are provided with access to a wide variety of distance education workshops. A satellite downlink is available to receive educational programming and satellite-delivered teleconferences. On-campus events (such as sessions with consultant trainers) are available as are mini-courses offered under the auspices of ASU's Office of Information Technology.

A Multimedia Instructional Support Center is available to faculty for developing multimedia presentations and interactive learning modules that enhance the distance learning experience. The training center, staffed by student technology assistants, is open for faculty use every workday afternoon and at other pre-arranged times. The student assistants are available to help the faculty with web page design and creation, image scanning and rendering, audio and video recording and compression, and basic technical support.

As previously mentioned, ASU also promotes the off-campus professional development of its distance education faculty through departmental travel funds and the awarding of Technology Development Grants and Faculty Development and Enrichment Grants.

3. (YES) Procedures are in place for appropriate evaluation of faculty involved in the distance education program (such as procedures that evaluate faculty-student interaction).

ASU's distance education faculty is evaluated in the same fashion as its faculty involved in on-campus instruction. Through procedures that have been formalized at the departmental, institutional, and system-wide levels, ASU observes a stringent evaluation process, which is documented in its Faculty-Staff Handbook and included in this document as Appendix Item D. Tenure-track and tenured faculty are evaluated in the areas of teaching, research (scholarly and creative activity), and service.

Since 1999, ASU has used the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction form as a primary means for the evaluation of teaching. All courses offered by ASU are evaluated each fall and spring semester. Originally, only a paper version of the IDEA instrument was available and it was mailed to students. With the advent of the fall 2001 semester, the survey was made available in a web-enabled version, which achieved a response rate in excess of eighty-two percent.

In the Fall 2001 Group Summary Report for Nursing, four items specifically assess student and faculty rapport. Each item appears below with its average score, which is based on a

five-point rating scale (1=hardly ever, 5=almost always).

- Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning. (4.5)
- Found ways to help students answer their own questions. (4.4)
- Explained the reasons for criticisms of students' academic performance. (4.1)
- Encouraged student-faculty interaction outside of class. (4.4)

Department heads consult with faculty about their evaluations. Suggestions for improvement are offered and peer counseling or mentoring are used when appropriate. Faculty who wish to compete effectively for promotion remain mindful of their annual evaluations and continuously seek to improve teaching and overall performance.

4. (YES) Please describe the role of faculty in development and evaluation of courses and their role in affirming adherence to the Principles of Good Practice.

As with all curricular courses, ASU faculty members bear the responsibility of distance education course development and evaluation. Faculty members typically attend web course development workshops and consult with their distance education peers. They make full use of available IT resources, including the Multimedia Instructional Support Center, which offers instruction in Blackboard, the institution's platform for distance education course delivery. As course development progresses, faculty members typically consult with departmental faculty and faculty on the various curriculum committees to secure valuable input that contributes to the quality of their proposed course.

Once again, evaluation of the course primarily takes place through the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction. This instrument provides vital input as to the successful and unsuccessful elements within a course. Prior to IDEA, the nursing faculty had used a survey that was built into course materials.

Affirmation to the Principles of Good Practices was initially an administrative verification of the developed course's level of high quality. With the change in THECB requirements from "affirmation" to "documentation" and as of June 2002, ASU faculty who are developing a distance education course must now complete the Checklist for Incorporating the Principles of Good Practice into Electronically-Based Courses. This document will accompany the proposed course as it journeys through the many steps of approval and it will remain on file in the Office of Academic Affairs to document compliance.

5. (YES) A policy exists that addresses faculty teaching load for those involved in distance education.

A class delivered via distance technology is part of the faculty member's regular load. These classes are not taught as overloads nor is release time given to present a class via distance technology. However, many of the current distance education courses at ASU have been developed by faculty members who, through a summer grant, have received a one or two

course release.

6. (NO) A process exists for evaluating the credentials of faculty employed by other institutions who are teaching courses for which your institution is awarding credit.

Angelo State University does not use faculty from other institutions to deliver its distance education courses. Should this become necessary in the future, it is anticipated that these faculty would meet the criteria established by the THECB and SACS.

7. (YES) The institution has policies on intellectual property, faculty compensation, copyright guidelines, and the distribution of revenue (if applicable) that are appropriate for distance education.

The copyright policy for Angelo State University, as presented in the Rules and Regulations of The Texas State University System, addresses matters pertaining to ownership of copyright, mediated coursework, competitive use of employee-owned mediated courseware, distribution of copyright royalties, use of copyrighted software, and revision and withdrawal of course materials. The complete copyright policy has been included in this document as Appendix Item E and is available through the TSUS web site. In addition, the Office of Information Technology publishes a number of policies that govern appropriate faculty and student use of e-mail, software, server, and web resources.
http://www.swt.edu/tsus/rules.html
http://www.angelo.edu/services/technology/policy.htm

Section 4. Student Support Services

1. (YES) The institution provides distance learners access to appropriate student services.

Admissions. Prospective students may access the Office of Admission through the ASU website by email or regular mail, and by phone via an 800 number. General admission requirements are available at the Admissions web site while more specific requirements for the online BSN are included at the Nursing web site. The Office of Admissions, as with all administrative services, is assessed annually via the aforementioned Institutional Effectiveness system.
http://www.angelo.edu/pstudent/admissions.htm

Registration. In order to complete successful registration, distance education students may access the Bulletin, Class Schedules, and the RAMS registration system via the ASU web site. While the Bulletin and Class Schedules are available 24/7, the registration system is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday through Friday and from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM, Saturday. The Office of the Registrar is assessed annually via the ASU Institutional Effectiveness system.
http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/university_catalog_2001.htm

http://www.angelo.edu/publications/scheduling_information.htm
http://rams.angelo.edu

Academic Advising. Advising services are provided for students in the online BSN program directly by the online faculty. They are accessible by phone, email, and in-person appointments. The Nursing Department maintains all necessary contact information on the campus web site. In addition, ASU has recently established a new Office of Academic Advising. As the need arises, advisors within this office will be assigned responsibilities within the distance education program. Both the Nursing Department and the Office of Academic Advisement are annually assessed via the Institutional Effectiveness system.
http://www.angelo.edu/dept/nursing/

Remedial Services. No remedial services are provided at this time as those involved in the online BSN have completed an associate degree program prior to admission. Hence the need for remediation is nonexistent.

Placement Services. The Office of Career Development handles all services associate with career planning, including testing and assessment, and job placement. Both on-campus and distance education students have access to such services as resume and interview skills development, job search strategies and information, and appropriate contact information. Both students and employers may register with the Office of Career Development online. Like other campus administrative areas, Career Development is assessed via the Institutional Effectiveness system.
http://www.angelo.edu/services/career/

Testing and Assessment. The Division of Continuing Studies coordinates ASU's various campus testing and assessment services including CLEP, correspondence examinations, registration for local ASU examinations, GRE Subject Examinations, LSAF, MRT, TEXES, TCLEOSE, and other specialized examinations. Continuing Studies may be reached via phone or e-mail, but it does not currently maintain a web page on the campus server. Due to the required level of security, the BSN exit exam is administered on campus by Nursing Department faculty.
http://www.angelo.edu/directory/office/index.htm#C

Orientation. An intensive on-campus orientation at the beginning of the online BSN program instructs students in the use of technology. They are shown how to register online, how to access course materials, how to navigate their way in Blackboard, and how to use the library. These items are also included for reference in the online BSN handbook, which also lists minimum hardware and technological skill requirements including such abilities as Internet browsing, sending email with attachments, and using a word processor. A detailed online help menu is also available to students at the Nursing web site, and additional assistance is located within the online Blackboard program. The on-campus orientation is regularly assessed via a survey instrument that is circulated to students while they are attending orientation.
http://www.angelo.edu/dept/nursing/bsn/competencies/index.htm

Computing Departments. The Office of Information Technology maintains a complete listing of all computer labs available for ASU student use. Through its web site, it also provides information on dial up and email access, proxy services, Blackboard, and software agreements. Information Technology is assessed annually through the Institutional Effectiveness system and biannually via the State Strategic Plan for Information Resources.
http://www.angelo.edu/services/technology

Financial Aid Office. Distance education students may access the Office of Financial Aid through the ASU web site. General information, a list of frequently asked questions, scholarship information, forms, and contact information are available online. The Office of Financial Aid is annually assessed through the Institutional Effectiveness system.
http://www.angelo.edu/services/financial_aid

Counseling. Due to the sensitive nature and requisite confidentiality involved, counseling services are not available through the ASU web site. Students may schedule an appointment with a counselor by phone and they are encouraged to bring forward their concerns involving relationship issues, adjustment, problem-solving, decision-making, stress management, test anxiety, and depression. Counseling services is assessed annually through the Institutional Effectiveness system.
http://www.angelo.edu/services/studentlife/counseling/

Help Desk/Hot Line. The ASU Help Desk is available to assist distance education students with hardware and software concerns. Students may refer to the Help Desk web site, which provides phone and email contact information. Help Desk services are available from 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM, Monday through Thursday, 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Friday, and 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, Saturday. Help Desk services are assessed annually through the Institutional Effectiveness system.
http://www.angelo.edu/services/technology/helpdesk.htm

2. (YES) Distance learners have access to library resources of an appropriate breadth and quality for the distance education program(s) offered.

Information Technology provides access to library services for online students. Dial-up and proxy server access provide availability, via the RamQuest gateway, to the online catalog, database search systems, electronic journals, Internet resources, and other library services. Additionally, TexShare cards allow students to use any participating Texas public or academic library, subject to local restrictions. Interlibrary Loan is available to distance education students as well. During their most recent reaccreditation visits, the Texas State Board of Nurse Examiners and the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission found current library resources sufficient to support the online BSN program.
http://www.angelo.edu/services/library/ramquest.htm

3. (NO) Creating learning communities for distant students is an emerging distance education trend.

ASU is not currently involved in the development of non-content oriented learning communities for distance education students.

Section 5. Distance Education Facilities and Support Services

1. (YES) The institution has available the facilities and equipment necessary to deliver its distance learning program.

Angelo State University's distance education program is focused on Internet accessible course materials and related resources. Angelo State University students enrolled in courses utilizing distance education may access online resources and course materials with a computer, web browser and an Internet connection. These Internet accessible distance education course materials are accessible to students at anytime from both on and off campus.

Angelo State University students may utilize the free campus dialup network or any other Internet Service Provider to access the online course resources. The campus dialup network consists of 96 modem connections each with a maximum speed of 56 kbs. Expansion of this service is planned for early fall 2002. In addition to dialup access, a majority of students in the residence halls may access the online course resources directly through the campus network via high-speed network connections in student living areas. Students without computer access at home may utilize one of the over 300 student use computers available throughout the campus in seven computer lab facilities.

The local Angelo State University network is connected to the Internet via a nine (9) megabit bi-directional link to the Texan2000 statewide data network. Through our partnership in the West Texas Disaster Recovery and Operations Center (WTDROC), the wide area network is fully redundant between our campus and the point of convergence on the Texan2000 network. Throughput on the wide area network is continually monitored to ensure response time consistent with established service objectives. The capacity plan for the wide area network has included bandwidth and supporting electronics upgrades annually over the past five years.

Specialized classroom management software is utilized to provide students with online course content and an array of services that enhance interaction between students and faculty. Software systems from Blackboard and Anlon are currently available to all Angelo State University faculty members interested in offering online course content. The software systems are operated from the campus Computer Center. The Computer Center is physically and electronically secured with complete climate and power conditioning to ensure continuous operation. The hardware platforms supporting these individual software systems are fault tolerant, high-availability servers with redundant power distribution and disk array subsystems. All hardware resources supporting distance education online services are part of an overall capacity planning process that includes replacement of any equipment outside the targeted service cycle. Currently, production servers that support Blackboard and Anlon are replaced every three years. To ensure complete recovery of all student and faculty data in the

event of a disaster, these systems are physically backed up to tape each night and rotated off-site per our technology disaster recovery plan.

In addition to classroom management software solutions available to Angelo State University faculty, a campus web server is provided to allow faculty the ability to create course related web pages. A faculty member may choose to create individual web pages and also utilize Blackboard or Anlon classroom management software. The hardware resources supporting the web server reside in the campus Computer Center and receive the same capacity planning, replacement and backup services as the classroom management software servers. All hardware and software systems associated with distance education offerings have service availability objectives that are closely monitored for performance.

2. (YES) Arrangements have been made for off-campus delivery of required laboratories, clinical placement sites, workshops, seminars, etc., associated with distance learning activities.

Nursing clinical placements of distance education students follow the same process as was utilized when the program was offered on-campus. Faculty and students work together to identify an appropriate clinical site and preceptor that satisfy BNE requirements. A cooperative agreement is signed with the host agency ensuring that the host administrator and preceptor will provide and facilitate student experiences consistent with course objectives. At minimum, nursing faculty maintain weekly contact with students and preceptors, and faculty retain the responsibility of all student clinical evaluations with input from the preceptors. A list of participating agencies has been included as Appendix Item F.

Appendix D: Minutes of meetings

October 18, 2006

PRESENT: Blount, Schonberg, Jones, Havlak, Gabbert, Martin (Dean of Students Debbie Hebert attended as invited guest)
ABSENT: Hadley, McKinney

Meeting began with roundtable introductions and then progressed through items in committee charge and additional areas of concern.

Jeff pointed out that the new *Teach Act* could create copyright concerns and cautioned committee about maintaining compliance.

1. What markets? Issues with Goodfellow AFB students immediately came up. Many are apparently not here long enough to meet residency requirements. There was general discussion about our potential profit/loss situation with freshman courses. Denise Brodnax and/or Angie Wright can get us data on this question. A comment was made that UNT and TAMU-K no longer offer developmental classes to anyone (DE or in person). Casey commented on the Texas Virtual College and stated that it has been quite successful for UT-PB and UT-Brownsville in their Criminal Justice programs. Grady distributed House Bill 1 information and commented on the potential for addressing high school and dual credit markets.
2. The only specific comments on item #2 were in a briefing document produced by Casey Jones.
3. Incentives? Additional pay or percentage of DE fee, work from home, or getting a piece of the workload every additional time a course developed by one faculty member is taught by another faculty member.
4. Fees? Grady described the tentative $50/sch DE fee included in the current tuition proposal
5. On line course requirement for graduation? There was no initial interest in this proposal.
6. Jeff brought up a question about how DE courses would be marketed? How registration would work, etc?
7. Group concluded that our report should include some elements of Best practices to use as guidance for faculty and administrators.
8. Debbie asked that we address several questions including eligibility for scholarship monies. She will prepare a white paper for the committee on her concerns.
9. The Wednesday afternoon at 3 PM time seemed to work for everyone. Casey Jones requested that we get an extension on our December 1st deadline.
10. Carl Martin agreed to set up a Ramport page for posting of supplementary materials.

October 24, 2006

PRESENT: All except Gabbert

Beth Tebeaux led off the discussion with:
- Carol Twig, Pew Foundation report to Coordinating Board on best practices examples of *high demand* courses which demonstrate both cost effectiveness and improved learning.
- Impact of the *college readiness* initiatives.
- General issues related to students shopping for core curriculum courses by price (market-driven degrees vs. education).
- Pre-requisites can be used as quality gate-keepers but must be careful when core courses are involved.
- General comments about using dual credit as a recruiting tool; particularly for mathematics, statistics, and teacher education classes.

Other Notes:
- Find details of recent Howard College/SAISD dual credit agreement
- Find "official" ASU DE Plan
- Find examples of FaceBook (http://www.facebook.com/) which has become popular with students in College Station.

Comments worth considering:
- DE likely not the best vehicle for *traditional-aged* freshman but could be useful for elder hostel, foreign and other non-traditional markets.
- Large market of MS-prepared individuals in ASU service area. Should look for PhD pipeline partnerships.
- CE or CEU is another market.

Committee Assignments:
The 9 charges shown above were farmed out for each cognizant committee member to work on. The expectation is to perform research on the assigned charge and submit a white paper to the RamPort group, preferably with citations. During the next week committee members and invited guests will be expected to provide commentary and critiques on the white papers:
- Identifying key issues
- Identifying a documenting best practices and/or unique opportunities
- Crafting a DE position which addresses the strengths and future potential of ASU efforts in this arena
- The assignments are: 1 (Markets) Casey and Bill
                         2 (Summer enrollments) Beth
                         3 (Incentives) Wrennah
                         4 (Fees) Karl
                         5 (Mandatory DE) open
                         6 (Best Practices) Carl and Nancy
                         7 (Student Life) Debbie
                         8 (Marketing) Jeff
                         9 (SACS Compliance) Grady