

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents
From: Board Office
Subject: Annual Report on Distance Education
Date: July 21, 2004

Recommended Action:

Receive the report.

Executive Summary:

This report concerns the distance education activities of the Regent universities. It also covers the three regional study centers and two councils which support communication and collaboration related to distance and continuing education.

Over the last three years, the number of Regent university courses and programs offered through distance education has remained steady. Enrollment in both credit and non-credit distance courses has also been stable. Important trends concern the competition for distance learners, patterns in students' enrollment behaviors, and the use of instructional delivery methods. Regent universities' distance education programs continue to reach students who live and work in communities throughout Iowa.

Background:

Distance education
definition

The Board of Regents Policy Manual §6.29 directs the Regent institutions to provide an annual comprehensive report on distance education. The policy manual defines distance education as a formal educational process in which instruction occurs either when student and instructor are not in the same place, or when face-to-face instruction is provided at off-campus locations. Distance education may employ any of various methods of instructional delivery, including guided independent study, and audio, video, or computer technologies. The reporting year for this report consists of summer 2003 through spring 2004.

Link to Strategic Plan

Distance education programming advances the Board's strategic priority of ensuring high-quality educational opportunities for students (Priority 1.0). The following two indicators in the Board's 2004-2009 Strategic Plan directly concern distance education activities:

1.2.1.2./1.3.2.1. Headcount enrollment in credit and non-credit courses offered through distance education and off-campus instruction in Iowa

1.2.1.3./1.3.2.2. Number of courses and programs offered via distance learning

Report on Strategic Plan Indicators

Table 1, below, reports figures on distance education-related indicators from the Board of Regents' Strategic Plan for each of the last three academic years.

Table 1: Report on Strategic Plan Indicators

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Credit courses and programs			
credit programs (degree, certificate, endorsement)	60	59	61
individual courses/sections	3,496	3,039	3,455
total student enrollments (duplicated headcount)	45,154	49,981	45,072
Non-credit courses			
total student enrollments (duplicated headcount)	474,757	474,957	479,676

Analysis:

Distance education facilitates access

The distance education programming of the Regent institutions makes learning available to many people for whom attending classes on campus would be unfeasible. For example, the Bachelor of Liberal Studies (BLS) provides access to upper division courses for completion of undergraduate liberal arts degrees by making maximum use of correspondence courses and other distance education offerings. Also for example, many continuing education units, such as SUI's Colleges of Pharmacy, Dentistry, and Nursing supply continuing education courses for working professionals through the ICN and the internet.

Overview of major trends

The Regent institutions report a number of prominent trends related to distance education. A discussion of major trends follows.

Competition for students is aggressive

Competition for Distance Learners

The universities continue to report extensive and growing competition for distance education students. Distance education providers compete for students through both pricing and aggressive marketing. Part of this general trend, made possible by the proliferation of web-based instructional programming, is the competition among institutions located throughout the country for independent-study students.

Distance education increasingly used to supplement on-campus coursework

Patterns in Enrollment Behaviors

The Regent universities report that more and more students are supplementing their on-campus experience with coursework obtained through distance means, often from other institutions. In other words, for an increasing number of students distance education is a component of, rather than an alternative to, the on-campus experience. In the years ahead, this trend might have implications for on-campus enrollments, the profile of students taking distance education courses, and the nature of distance education programming.

Trends in delivery methods, particularly use of the ICN

Use of Instructional Delivery Methods

Trends in enrollment and programming by delivery method are somewhat related to trends in competition for students. In addition, they reflect trends in available educational technology.

UNI offering fewer summer workshops

UNI reports offering far fewer on-site summer workshops for teachers than it has in past years, apparently due to the availability to students of competitive alternatives for earning credit. UNI continues to rely heavily on the Iowa Communications Network (ICN), with WebCT enhancement, to provide distance learning opportunities.

ICN enrollments down for SUI and ISU, up for UNI

Both SUI and ISU report a shift away from ICN video delivery towards web or web-supported methods. Such methods include video streaming, web conferencing using audio and video, and more recently the use of two-way audio with white board and application-sharing capability.

The Regent university total enrollment in ICN classes continued its downward trend in 2003-2004. Since 2000-01, total enrollment in ICN classes has declined some 34%. However, individually, UNI has experienced increases in ICN course enrollments every year over the same period.

Factors contributing to ICN enrollment decline

Factors contributing to the continued decline in use of the ICN are the relative expense of the ICN, and the wide-spread availability and relative affordability of web-based instructional delivery as an alternative. Also, offering courses through the ICN requires a critical mass of students able to commit to a scheduled day and time.

Trends in geographic distribution of students

Geographic Distribution of Students across Iowa

One measure of the extent of outreach provided by the three Regent universities is the number of Iowa counties and communities in which distance education programs are offered. Counting both course sections at distance sites and the residence locations of individuals enrolled in individually-delivered courses, Regents universities reached 371 Iowa communities in all 99 Iowa counties through distance education in 2003-2004. The map of Iowa in Appendix A presents data concerning service to Iowa counties

Implications of trends in state support

Flat State Support

Trends confronting higher education more generally, such as flat state support for higher education, also affect distance education. Distance education units are essentially self-supporting. Nevertheless, the quality and availability of distance education offerings correspond to the quality and availability of campus courses since, for example, faculty for distance education courses are often drawn from the campus faculty.

Councils provide communication and collaboration

Two councils support communication and collaboration related to distance and continuing education among the Regent universities and across educational sectors

SECEC

Both the State Extension and Continuing Education Council (SECEC) and the Coordinating Council for Virtual Learning (CCVL) consist of senior extension and continuing education officers from the Regent universities. The SECEC serves as an effective medium of information exchange among the Regent universities.

CCVL

The Coordinating Council for Virtual Learning exists as a result of the board's strong interest at the time it was constituted in monitoring the web-based instructional activities of the Regents universities. The Coordinating Council for Virtual Learning reports annually to the Board Office on Regents universities' use of web-based technology in instruction and instructional support.

Regional Study Centers

The Regent universities provide services and programming through three regional study centers: the Quad-Cities Graduate Study Center, located Rock Island, IL; the Tri-State Graduate Center, located in Sioux City; and the Southwest Iowa Regents Resource Center, located in Council Bluffs. Enrollment by Regents students and Regent universities' program offerings at regional study centers in 2003-04 are provided in Appendices D and E.

Appendices provide detailed statistics

The appendices attached to this report provide greater detail about the Regents universities' distance education enrollment and programming. The appendices provide the following information:

Appendix A: 2003-2004 Distance Education Credit Courses By Iowa County: Communities and Enrollments

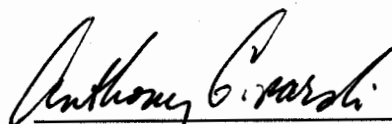
Appendix B: Summary of 2003-2004 Enrollment by Delivery, Level, and Credit/Non-Credit Category

Appendix C: 2003-04 Credit Course Registrations (Graduate and Undergraduate) by Institution and Subject Area

Appendix D: 2003-04 Non-Credit Course Registrations by Institution and Subject Area

Appendix E: Regent University Programs at Regional Study Centers 2003-04

Appendix F: Enrollment of Regent Students at Regional Study Centers 1999-2000 to 2003-04


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Approved:


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Appendix B
Regent Universities Distance Education Enrollment Summary:
2003-2004 Enrollment by Delivery, Level, and Credit

	Under-graduate	Graduate	Non-Credit
1. On-campus (Saturday & Evening)	26,437	4,270	64,621
2. Off-campus			
a. ICN	1247	1760	1929
b. World Wide Web	2,010	1,585	1,727
c. Iowa Public Television Telecourses	64	4	0
d. Guided Correspondence Study	3163	386	305
e. Other Off-campus (including extension & MBA)	4,751	10,850	399,277
TOTAL (on-campus + off-campus)	37,672	18,855	467,859

Appendix C
2003-04 Credit Course Registrations by Institution and Subject Area

Subject Matter	SUI		ISU		UNI		Regents Total			
	UG	Grad	UG	Grad	UG	Grad	UG	Grad	Grad & UG	% of Total
Business, Mngmt, & Marketing	1,100	3,503	2,427	1,372	65	375	3,592	5,250	8,842	15.6%
Education	992	1,108	687	2,285	502	2,214	2,181	5,607	7,788	13.8%
Parks, Rec., Leisure & Fitness Studies	1,666	80	132	78	1,889	478	3,687	636	4,323	7.6%
Social Sciences	2,071	84	883	422	645	123	3,599	629	4,228	7.5%
Leisure And Recreational Activities	3,756	29	0	0	0	0	3,756	29	3,785	6.7%
Visual And Performing Arts	1,962	291	484	62	125	58	2,571	411	2,982	5.3%
English Language & Literature/Letters.	1,491	84	559	300	84	270	2,134	654	2,788	4.9%
Family & Consumer Sci./Human Sciences	0	0	1,007	445	505	5	1,512	450	1,962	3.5%
Health Professions & Clinical Sciences	1,094	601	190	0	0	0	1,284	601	1,885	3.3%
Mathematics And Statistics	830	21	530	211	116	168	1,476	400	1,876	3.3%
Communication and Journalism	1,583	13	73	61	90	42	1,746	116	1,862	3.3%
Public Administration & Social Service	395	1,235	0	0	0	0	395	1,235	1,630	2.9%
Physical Sciences	226	14	171	287	475	220	872	521	1,393	2.5%
Psychology	867	42	215	42	136	7	1,218	91	1,309	2.3%
Engineering	5	13	446	800	0	0	451	813	1,264	2.2%
Foreign Languages, Lit., & Linguistics	982	22	147	2	52	3	1,181	27	1,208	2.1%
Philosophy And Religious Studies	859	29	176	4	88	3	1,123	36	1,159	2.1%
Biological And Biomedical Sciences	49	139	800	100	0	0	849	239	1,088	1.9%
History	714	29	31	1	32	3	777	33	810	1.4%
Area, Ethnic, Cultural, & Gender Studies	564	11	60	2	155	0	779	13	792	1.4%
Architecture And Related Services	0	0	562	160	0	0	562	160	722	1.3%
Agriculture, Agric. Operations & Sciences	0	0	429	268	0	0	429	268	697	1.2%
Interdisciplinary Studies	338	43	87	14	71	0	496	57	553	1.0%
Computer And Info. Sciences & Support	265	48	0	31	18	1	283	80	363	0.6%
Library Science	1	119	123	0	9	109	133	228	361	0.6%
Technology Education/Industrial Arts	0	0	0	0	233	117	233	117	350	0.6%
Liberal Arts & Sci., & Humanities	0	0	213	0	0	0	213	0	213	0.4%
Engineering Technologies/Technicians	0	0	69	69	0	0	69	69	138	0.2%
Legal Professions & Studies	1	84	0	0	0	0	1	84	85	0.2%
Health-Related Knowledge And Skills	0	0	0	0	42	0	42	0	42	0.1%
Natural Resources & Conservation	0	0	28	1	0	0	28	1	29	0.1%
Total Registrations	21,811	7,642	10,529	7,017	5,332	4,196	37,672	18,855	56,527	100.0%

Appendix D
2003-04 Non-Credit Course Registrations by Institution and Subject Area

Subject Matter	SUI	ISU	UNI	Regents Univ. Total	% of Regents Total
Personal Awareness And Self-Improvement	928	147,511	592	149,031	31.1%
Family & Consumer Sciences		112,026		112,026	23.4%
Agriculture, Agric. Operations & Sciences		103,880		103,880	21.7%
Public Admin., Social Service Professions	8,312	33,013		41,325	8.6%
Health Professions & Clinical Sciences	16,842		25	16,867	3.5%
Visual And Performing Arts	14,645		671	15,316	3.2%
Business, Mngmt, & Marketing		9,540	2,196	11,736	2.4%
Engineering	177	10,504		10,681	2.2%
Parks, Rec., Leisure & Fitness Studies		83	3,556	3,639	0.8%
Education	68	344	2,225	2,637	0.5%
English Language And Literature/Letters.	2,295		230	2,525	0.5%
Liberal Arts & Sciences And Humanities	2,099			2,099	0.4%
Interpersonal And Social Skills		1,819		1,819	0.4%
Social Sciences	1,313	3	380	1,696	0.4%
Physical Sciences	453	60	1,040	1,553	0.3%
Legal Professions And Studies	622			622	0.1%
Computer And Information Sciences		594		594	0.1%
Mathematics And Statistics	500		34	534	0.1%
Leisure And Recreational Activities			300	300	0.06%
Communication and Journalism		94	145	239	0.05%
Trades And Industry			228	228	0.05%
Foreign Languages, Lit., And Linguistics		54	62	116	0.02%
Area, Ethnic, Cultural, And Gender Studies			78	78	0.02%
Health-Related Knowledge And Skills			60	60	0.01%
Architecture And Related Services		54		54	0.01%
Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies	21			21	0.00%
Total Enrollments	48,275	419,579	11,822	479,676	

Appendix E
Regent University Programs at Regional Study Centers 2003-04

Degree/certificate	Program Major	Quad-Cities GSC	Southwest Iowa Regent Resource Ctr	Tri-State GSC
<u>Iowa State University</u>				
Certificate	Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy		Y	
Certificate	Advanced Studies (Superintendency)		Y	
Certificate	Dietetics Communication & Counseling		Y	
Certificate	Dietetics Management		Y	
Certificate	Educational Leadership			Y
Certificate	Family Financial Planning		Y	Y
Certificate	Financial Counselor	Y	Y	Y
Certificate	Gerontology		Y	
Certificate	Information Assurance		Y	
Certificate	Power Systems Engineering		Y	
Certificate	Public Management	Y	Y	Y
Certificate	Superintendency	Y		
B.L.S.	Bachelor of Liberal Studies		Y	
M.Ag.	Agriculture		Y	Y
M.C.R.P.	Community & Regional Planning	Y	Y	Y
M.Ed.	Curriculum & Instructional Technology		Y	
M.Ed. or M.S.	Family & Consumer Science		Y	
M.E.	Systems Engineering		Y	Y
M.F.C.S.	Family & Consumer Science		Y	
M.P.A.	Public Administration	Y	Y	Y
M.S.	Agriculture	Y		
M.S.	Agronomy	Y	Y	Y
M.S.	Computer Engineering	Y	Y	Y
M.S.	Electrical Engineering	Y	Y	Y
M.S.	Family/Consumer Sciences	Y		
M.S.	Mathematics Education	Y		
M.S.	Mechanical Engineering		Y	Y
M.S.	Microbiology	Y		
M.S.	Systems Engineering	Y		
M.S.M.	School Mathematics		Y	Y
Ph.D.	Food Serve & Lodging Management		Y	
<u>University of Iowa</u>				
Certificate	Public Health		Y	Y
Endorsement	Community College Teaching	Y	Y	
B.L.S.	Bachelor of Liberal Studies		Y	
M.A.	Library & Information Science		Y	Y
M.A.	Middle Level Education	Y		
M.B.A.	Business Administration	Y		
M.L.A.	Library & Information Science	Y		
M.P.H.	Public Health	Y	Y	
M.S.	Nursing	Y	Y	Y
M.S.W.	Social Work	Y		Y
Ph.D.	Pharmacy		Y	

Appendix E (continued)
Regent University Programs at Regional Study Centers 2003-04

Degree/certificate	Program Major	Quad-Cities GSC	Southwest Iowa Regent Resource Ctr	Tri-State GSC
<u>University of Northern Iowa</u>				
Certificate	Advanced Studies (Superintendency)		Y	
Certificate	Criminology		Y	
Certificate	Environmental Health		Y	
Certificate	Gerontology		Y	
Endorsement	Community College Teaching		Y	
Endorsement	Driver Education		Y	
Endorsement	English as a Second Language		Y	
B.L.S.	Bachelor of Liberal Studies		Y	
M.A.	Communication Education		Y	
M.A.	Early Childhood Education		Y	
M.A.	Educational Leadership	Y	Y	Y
M.A.	Educational Technology		Y	
M.A.	Elementary Education		Y	
M.A.	English as a Second Language		Y	Y
M.A.	Library & Information Science	Y		
M.A.	Literacy		Y	
M.A.	Middle Level Education		Y	
M.A.	Middle School Mathematics		Y	
M.A.	Music Education	Y		
M.A.	School Library Media Studies			Y
M.A.	Science Education		Y	

"Y" indicates program is offered.

Appendix F
Enrollment of Regent Students at Regional Study Centers 1999-2000 to 2003-04

	1999 - 2000	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004	Five Year Total
Quad-Cities	1,084	925	1,312	1,209	1,165	5,695
Southwest IA	528	467	500	371	241	2,107
Tri-State	431	590	461	349	321	2,152
Totals	2,043	1,982	2,273	1,929	1,727	8,227