



Nor t h West
Ar k a n s a s
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C o l l e g e

D i s t a n c e
L e a r n i n g
R e p o r t
1999-2000

Clint Brooks
Distance Learning
Coordinator



NorthWest Arkansas Community College Distance Learning Report 1999-2000

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Distance Learning Coordinator**

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Introduction and Acknowledgements

This document contains the Annual Report on Distance Learning as required by the Distance Learning Plan of NorthWest Arkansas Community College. The purpose of this report is to review the progress and events involving distance learning at NWACC. This report covers the classes offered in distance learning over the 1999-2000 school year as well as plans for the upcoming year. In addition, all business involving the Distance Learning department or personnel is addressed in this report including statewide and local initiatives supported by personnel from the department.

Acknowledgements and thanks to Paul Osborn for his tireless support and supervision of the Distance Learning department as Associate Vice President for Extended Learning; also to Dr. Karen Hodges for her support and invaluable assistance as Vice President for Academic Affairs. Additional acknowledgements go to the Distance Education Committee for their hard work on faculty compensation this year and to the Web Task Force for their timely work on an interim Applications and Registrations process for distant students. Thanks to Jim Barnsley and David Miller for their backup support of the Distance Learning Lab. Special Thanks to Dr. Bob Burns and the Board of Trustees for their constant support and promotion of the distance learning efforts at NWACC. Finally, acknowledgements and thanks to the wonderful faculty and students who have made our program successful and growing through their diligent efforts and pioneering spirit.

My appreciation to Sharon Simmons for the printing of the color covers for this report.

Administrative

5 Year DE Plan

In compliance with Arkansas Act 1297, the distance learning program has been included in the institutional technology plan sent by NWACC to the Department of Information Systems of the State of Arkansas. In addition to this information, NWACC has included a copy of the latest proposed 5-year Distance Learning Plan as an appendix to the technology plan.

Presently the 5-year Distance Learning Plan is scheduled for review in September 2000. In order to better coordinate this plan with the Master Institutional Planning process, this review and revision process will be moved to the Spring beginning in 2001.

The Distance Learning Committee continues to serve as the primary oversight and advisement body. Paul Osborn, the Associate Vice President for Extended Learning in the Department of Academic Affairs was the department's supervisor. A list of Committee members for 1999-2000 can be found on page 19 of this report.

Equipment and Facilities

Equipment Purchases and Facility Changes

The major equipment acquisition for the year involved Compressed Interactive Video (CIV). In the Summer of 1999, the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville donated the VTEL Media Max CIV unit they have been loaning to the college since 1995. The unit thus became the sole property of NWACC. NWACC has already been paying monthly line charges, so the only additional encumbrance would be annual maintenance charges. For the Media Max, these charges run about \$6000 a year.

However, in October NWACC was able, as planned, to purchase an upgrade for the Media Max, replacing it with a VTEL LC 3200 unit (Pentium II, Windows 95 machine). This upgrade included a free one-year warranty, which served as the equivalent of the maintenance contract and which in practical terms applied the \$6000 that would have gone toward the Media Max maintenance to the new unit. In addition, the annual maintenance contract for the LC 3200 is lower than the Media Max equivalent (by about \$800).

No major additional facility or equipment changes were made during 1999-2000.

Planned Equipment Purchases and Facility Changes

For 2000-2001 the likelihood of the relocation of any distance learning facilities or equipment is low. This may change if substantial revenues are raised for the planned East End addition to the CEF. Plans indicate that a distance learning room may be included in this addition if enough funds are available for the development of significant second floor space. If this change does occur, it will be necessary to consider relocating the satellite equipment and dishes, if the relocation is a permanent one. If not, the satellite equipment will remain where it is until a permanent solution is developed.

The main possibility for equipment addition would be the relocation of the Web CT server for online (WWW Based) classes to the NWACC campus. AIS is adding a new bank of leased NT servers to the campus in the Fall of 2000. It is highly likely that one of these servers or part of one can be dedicated to Web CT. If so, the server being leased from IPA (see **Classes**) will be discontinued. Present plans are to use a new server if available for training and conversion of courses to the latest version of Web CT and then switch to the new server for the Spring 2001 semester.

Budgetary Information

Budget for 1999-2000

The following is a table containing the requested budget for 2000-2001. These numbers only include funds in accounts directly controlled by Distance Learning. Funds for the leasing of servers, line charges, and other related telecommunications expenses are controlled by AIS.

NWACC Department of Distance Learning

Budget Estimates for 2000-2001

Item/Category	Subtotals	Est. Annual Amount
Maintenance and Operations Expenses		
<i>Office Expenses</i>		
Phone/Long Distance		\$200.00
Copying		\$700.00
Postage		\$100.00
Supplies-Internal		\$100.00
Supplies-External		\$100.00
Computer Equipment under \$500		
Computer Hardware < \$500		\$200.00
Computer Software		\$200.00
Computer Equipment over \$500		
No anticipated expenses from 470 or 471		
Travel		
Travel-Lodging and Meals		\$450.00
Travel-Private Vehicle, In-State		\$700.00
Dues, Fees, Publicity, and Advertising		
Advertising		\$250.00
Fees-Telecourses		\$3,150.00
Fees- Telecourse Capitation Estimates		\$3,360.00
Fees-Satellite Conf. Licenses		\$1,500.00
Fees-Telecourse Consortium		\$150.00
Fees- Licenses for WWW Based courses		\$159.00
Fees-Vtel Maintenance and Service Contract	\$5,274.00	
Tax on Maintenance and Service Contract	\$268.92	
Total for Maintenance and Service Contract		\$5,542.92
Subtotals of Maintenance and Service Contract		
VTEL System, Monitors, Mics, ELMO	\$4,921	
TSU100	\$353	

Printing Expenses	\$250.00
Web CT License	\$1,500.00
Facilitator Costs at Springdale	\$1,280
Total A Items	\$16,502.92
Total C Items	\$3,389.00
Grand Total Including Salary and Fringe	\$62,959.92
Estimated Income from Distance Learning Student Fees	\$11,352.00
Requested M&O minus estimated income from DL Student Fees	\$8,539.92
Grand Total Including Salary and Fringe minus estimated student fees income	\$51,607.92

Classes

Classes Conducted

CIV (Compressed Interactive Video)

For 1999-2000 the compressed video courses continued to struggle in terms of audience. The AFROTC courses have yet to make mainly due to the fact that the exact same classes are offered on campus the same day of the week a required Leadership Lab at the University of Arkansas is conducted. Most students simply attend those classes since they have to be in Fayetteville anyway. In any case, the numbers of students who sign up is small.

The Academic Skills math classes to the University of Arkansas have been cancelled due to very low enrollment. This was a particular disappointment, given that this was our initial target market for classes and that the U of A was our first partner in videoconferencing. On the other hand, the Jones Center evening enrollment suggests there is a market there for Academic Skills classes and perhaps others.

A Western Civilization Step Ahead class was conducted to Lincoln. Initial numbers from Lincoln were low but some bright signs are that the Lincoln class numbers are tentatively in the teens for the Fall of 2000 not including students from Prairie Grove who will be added to the class. The class itself proved to be very interesting, especially the mix of high school Step Ahead students and regular college students. The Lincoln students have gradually become more assertive but still lack some confidence in discussions compared to the local NWACC section. However, they did seem to perform better on average for grades. Hopefully, more classes can be added for this market.

Telecourses

The telecourses have shown somewhat of an improvement in retention over the year. The instructors have attributed this to requiring students to do oral testing, which requires an on-campus to visit with the instructor one-on-one or in small groups. Telecourse web pages were moved on to the Web CT server to take advantage of the communications tools Web CT offers but have seen little in the way of usage so far. Enrollment also has remained fairly strong.

We are continuing to use Guides for the telecourses, which provide information for students, including syllabi, schedules- including testing and broadcasts, campus resource information, as well as self-assessment tools and other important information useful to students in a telecourse.

Self-Directed Study

On balance retention was about the same but mainly because of some atypical student struggles in the Literature class. In the spring the Business Communications class had the distinction of having no withdrawals OR failures, and only one "D". Intro to OSHA was offered in the fall but not offered in the spring, replaced by Database Management (Access). The Database class seemed to do well, with the instructor modifying the approach to take advantage of the independent study by setting up the course as a long-term project database, as opposed to the classroom model of several smaller projects.

The Self-Directed Study courses are also using Course Guides (with the exception of the OSHA course, which relied heavily on the WWW). These guides contain more information than the Telecourse guides do, as these classes do not have the video/broadcast component. The Self-Directed Guides frequently include handouts, worksheets, and tutorial documents. More of these will be encouraged since one of the issues raised by an instructor has been the lack of opportunity to use repetition to drive home points and remind students of details as would occur in a face to face classroom.

Internet/Web-Based

The first official WWW Based courses at NWACC were offered in the Spring (the OSHA class in the Fall of 1999 being listed as Self-Directed Study): Art Appreciation, College Chemistry I, Basic HTML Programming, Internet Resourcing, and English Composition II. The faculty teaching them independently designed 3 of the 5 courses. The remaining 2 courses are publisher designed courses associated with the publisher's textbook for that course. The courses were in Web CT on a server leased from IPA in Ft. Smith, Arkansas.

These courses posed new challenges, as they required a higher level of technical support than any other distance learning classes save the interactive video. Also, the instructors were forced to come up with new ways to communicate with their students and responded admirably, using e-mail and the built-in features of Web CT to facilitate this.

The most surprising aspect of the courses was the overwhelmingly positive enrollment numbers. With the exception of the Chemistry I class, which required an on campus lab once a week, all of the classes filled or came close to filling, demonstrating that not only are online/WWW classes attractive to distance students, but also to NWACC's general population. Retention was a moderate concern with some withdrawals, but part of this can be attributed to the fact that some students were enrolled without a required meeting with their instructor (in person or via technology) before being given permission to enter the class. We hope that, until a less time consuming method is found, Instructor Consent for WWW classes will dissuade students who are not up to the rigors of DL and the WWW (either the technology or the independence) from these classes until they are ready.

ACCESS Arkansas

By offering WWW-Based classes for the first time, NWACC also began its formal participation as an active provider of classes for ACCESS, Arkansas, the state consortium of two-year colleges offering online classes. All of the WWW-Based classes NWACC offered were listed on the

ACCESS Arkansas web site. Classes were offered in Art Appreciation, HTML, Internet Resourcing, Chemistry, and English Composition II.

Classes Planned

CIV (Compressed Interactive Video)

Plans are to continue the Western Civilization course to Lincoln HS, with 1003 in the fall and 1013 in the spring. Lincoln has announced expectations of increased enrollment for the Fall 2000 semester. Hopefully a math class can be added as well. A class in Plant Sciences is planned for Fall 2000 to be delivered from the University of Arkansas as part of the ACTA Agricultural Studies consortium.

Telecourses

Plans are to include an American history course for the Fall of 2000. Greg Kiser will teach the class. The course is only offered for the Fall semester by AETN however, so we will need to consider College by Cassette in the future if we intend to carry it on a regular basis. This format involves making cassettes of the telecourse series available to students, either through on campus or local distribution, or through a third party vendor who will rent the tapes directly to the students for a semester.

No other plans to teach new telecourses exist at this time. Unless NWACC moves to the college by cassette format, we will be limited in what we can offer in this format by the AETN schedule.

Self-Directed Study

No new self-directed classes are planned at this juncture. Much will depend on whether or not the present courses move to the WWW and whether or not other instructors display an interest in this format.

Internet/Web-Based

The Fall 2000 semester will see 2 new online/WWW-Based courses. The first is Principles of Accounting II, taught by Le Ann Caudle. The second is General Psychology, taught by Karen Tinker. One concern regarding the Psychology class is that, although the instructor is highly motivated and has thought through the online paradigm, the class will be competing with the more established telecourse version. At some point it may be necessary to rotate these courses or to choose one over the other if there does not appear to be a large enough audience to support both.

ACCESS Arkansas

The new Web-based courses have been listed with ACCESS Arkansas for the fall of 2000.

Training

The primary training initiatives for the preceding year have involved Web CT. I have participated in ACCESS Arkansas sponsored training in Web CT conducted at Pulaski Technical College. Consequently, much of the training done here at NWACC has been based on those sessions. In addition, Angela Peace has conducted similar training for NWACC in the use of Web CT. This training has primarily consisted of the usage of the software and applications for such usage in the classroom. The training has consisted of hands-on sessions in computer labs lasting approximately 4 hours, with a typical block of training consisting of 2 4-hour sessions on consecutive weeks.

I have also conducted 4-hour sessions on the instructional use of the Internet and World Wide Web. These sessions are aimed at introducing the instructor to the possibilities of the WWW for instruction, from fully WWW-based classes to online support pages.

In addition to these, I have been engaged in consulting and support for the WWW-Based courses and other distance learning courses on an informal basis.

I have also continued to conduct compressed video training on an as needed basis for those instructors who use the system. This training is an informal version of the outline developed by myself and Bob Craig of the University of Arkansas that can be found at the following URL: <http://labs.nwacc.cc.ar.us/disted/nwdetciv.htm> (and also in a Spanish translation at <http://www.cesga.es/ga/Teleensino/UsoVideoconf.html> courtesy of El Centro de Supercomputación de Galicia in Spain).

The other training initiatives are based on two objectives. First, as part of the institutional self-study in preparation for the NCA team visit, the distance learning sub-committee suggested as an area for improvement, training for telecourse and self-directed study instructors. This development has not been completed yet but should be in an initial form some time within the next year. The primary goal will be to develop a collection of resource materials for instructors to review and to conduct an orientation to the particular medium (telecourse or self-directed study). In addition, I hope to develop a basic handbook on distance learning for faculty, one that can be published on a limited and local basis.

Second, as part of the proposed plan for faculty compensation, the Distance Education Committee has recommended that before any training in distance learning occurs, faculty should be required to do general research into resource materials provided by the Distance Learning Department. The task at hand for the coming year is to find and organize these resources into a form that faculty can efficiently utilize.

NCA Self Study

In the fall of 1999, the NCA formally continued NWACC accreditation for the next ten years. As part of that continued accreditation, NWACC is expected to achieve progress in all “areas for improvement”. The Distance Learning Department’s areas for improvement are listed below, including the recommendations of the committee for action on each item. These are reprinted from the NWACC self-study.

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations for Distance Learning

The DE Task Committee has identified the following areas for improvement in the Distance Learning Department. They have been indexed to the appropriate NCA-CIHE Guideline. They are each also accompanied by recommendations on how to address them.

1. Student Interaction in Telecourses and Self-Directed Study Courses (Curriculum and Instruction): Programs provide for timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty and among students. The student survey responses as well as some evaluation feedback have indicated that some students in these courses do not feel as though they have sufficient contact with other students. While these courses are geared toward independent study and work, the social context of these classes and the benefits of student contact and cooperation should not be ignored.

Recommendation: Incorporate Web CT to add interactivity between students. Web CT functions that may facilitate this include Chat (synchronous communication) and Bulletin Board (asynchronous). Develop student study groups (voluntary only) that give students a chance to communicate via phone and e-mail, as well as meet independently. In the past some students have done this on their own. Another possibility that will be explored is altering the structure of the classes so students must meet more with the instructor, either as a group or individuals.

2. Telecourse and Self-Directed Study Training (Curriculum and Instruction): The institution provides appropriate training for faculty who teach in distance education programs. While CIV training is well developed and Web Based Classes training is under development, the training in these two areas has been minimal at best. This has been done primarily through consultation and support, which is underscored by the fact that of all distance learning at NWACC, telecourse and self-directed study instructors must be the most independent, due to the nature of their courses.

Recommendation: The Distance Learning Department should develop orientation sessions for novice instructors using these technologies and develop and provide resources for potential instructors.

3. Assessment (Evaluation and Assessment): The institution assesses student capability to succeed in distance education programs. Assessment is a high priority at NWACC and the Distance Learning Department is no exception. There especially exists the need to develop pre-assessment for students interested in distance learning so that they can accurately analyze their likelihood of success. A need also exists for analyzing distance learning for any possible significant differences in those classes compared to the traditional offerings.

Recommendation: The College has hired an Academic Learning Assessment Coordinator who has helped advance the development of effective and comprehensive assessment programs in each department and institutionally, as initiated by the Assessment

Committee. As each department and division continues to develop its own guidelines and policies for assessing the ways in which the curriculum has been taught and learned, the Distance Learning Department needs to focus in two areas unique to itself.

A. An effective means of pre-assessment for students considering distance learning classes is needed. This would serve two purposes: Identify which students are likely to succeed or struggle in various types of distance learning environments and advise students accordingly. The latter purpose might also include working with students to develop the skills necessary to succeed in distance learning. Since the types of distance learning and their requisite skills differ, this will take careful research, consideration and planning.

B. The Distance Learning Department needs to develop assessment of student outcomes, especially identifying any discrepancies between outcomes of students in distance learning and those in regular "face to face" classes. Some basic methods are in place. Grades in distance learning classes are tracked and attitudes are surveyed via evaluations. The key effort will be to develop a reliable form of evaluation using these and heretofore unused methods. Other methods will need to be explored including surveys of graduates and students who have advanced from distance learning classes.

4. Monitoring Use of Student Resources (Library and Learning Resources): The institution monitors whether students make appropriate use of learning resources. At present, some informal tracking is done of resource utilization by distance learning students. A standard procedure for obtaining this information does not exist.

Recommendation- Web CT will aid in web-based courses as it contains tracking applications, which will record usage of online students. Altering the evaluations to discover if resources are being used is another possibility. They are already used to gauge student attitudes about the value of the class web pages. More tracking for individual resources (sign in sheets, logbooks, etc.) should be applied to resources that do not offer an easier system of tracking usage, especially those that are made available at off campus sites.

5. Advertising/Recruiting/Information: The institution provides to students advertising, recruiting and admissions information that adequately and accurately represents the programs, requirements and services available. Other than brochures designed by the Distance Learning Department and published by Student Services and the Distance Learning Web Site, there is no concerted literature or contacts aimed at distance students. The audience that this has the greatest impact on is our smallest distance population: compressed video students off campus. Other distance students usually live in the immediate area and are able to avail themselves of the standard services and literature. Even then, the amount of information provided is limited at best.

Recommendation: Continue to provide materials to Student Orientation (NSO, SOAR) for distribution/dissemination to students, flyers for Arena registration, brochures/flyers for advisors. Make publications available to off campus students.

Local Initiatives and Business

Local initiatives and business included the local and college satellite downlinks described below.

In addition, local videoconferences were held for Nursing students and faculty (the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences broadcast on Nutrition and Aging: Weight, Body Composition and Chronic Conditions), and Criminal Justice (a conference on School Violence from the Criminal Justice Institute that was attended by police officers from as far away as Ft. Smith).

No specifically local initiatives have been undertaken in the past year. I expect the following year to include the development of a community education plan, which will rely heavily on the satellite receiving equipment. This plan may include the formation of a Community Education Advisory Board.

In December of 1999, I joined the advisory board for technology at the Fayetteville Public Schools at the request of Gail Quillen, the Technology Coordinator there. I have also been asked to participate on the Distance Learning advisory board there and have accepted.

State Initiatives and Business

The following list describes state initiatives or groups that the NWACC Distance Learning Department has been involved in or with, or that directly affect distance learning at NWACC.

ACCESS Arkansas

ACCESS Arkansas has continued to offer WWW Based classes statewide and NWACC continues to be an active member, offering our first classes in the Spring of 2000. ACCESS Arkansas plans to continue to develop training and marketing of WWW classes in Arkansas. NWACC has been active in planning for the group through our Vice President for Academics Karen Hodges.

ARDLA /USDLA

The Arkansas Distance Learning Association is the state chapter of the United States Distance Learning Association. NWACC currently hosts the ARDLA web site and I am the webmaster for the site. In exchange for this service, ARDLA has provided NWACC with a free institutional membership in the chapter. This includes 4 individual memberships. The ARDLA members for 1999-2000 are Victoria McClendon, Paul Osborn, Dr. Conrad Krauft, and myself. I am presently serving on the Publications committee.

The chapter holds an annual meeting at Fairfield Bay in October. The first annual meeting was in October of 1999 but none of the NWACC members were unable to attend.

Arkansas Telecourse Consortium

The Arkansas Telecourse Consortium is made up of all higher education institutions in Arkansas that conduct telecourses (either broadcast or college by cassette). I am a member of the Executive Committee. This committee's job is to approve the schedule for the upcoming semesters. This is a crucial task as AETN, the programming provider for broadcasts, has only 8 slots per semester

for courses. We have been able to ensure the continued offering of both Psychology and Sociology, due to their popularity. The ultimate aim of the consortium is to provide the core degree requirements for the AA or BA degree plans in the state of Arkansas.

ELE (AETN/Arkansas Leadership Academy)

The Electronic Learning Environment Institute is a weeklong event designed to introduce technology to educators and assist them in developing strategies for the application of the technology to their classrooms. The Institute is sponsored by AETN and is part of the Arkansas Leadership Academy (and each Institute takes place in conjunction with the ALA). Two other members of NWACC (Mary Ann Shope and Louise Lamb) and I, have participated in the Institute. Consequently, I have been asked to participate again in the planning of ELE, and as an instructor, particularly for the purposes of distance learning instruction. These sessions are delivered from NWACC through the use of our compressed videoconference system. I have also been asked to conduct workshops in Web Page Development and Internet Applications ("Computers and Networking" is the official title) for the upcoming summer session of the Institute. The Institute takes place at Fairfield Bay, Arkansas.

Legislation

Distance Learning was directly addressed in the 1999 legislative session and consequently several issues have developed during the 1999-2000 year. The key issues are as follows:

Under Act 1297, all distance learning programs are required to submit a plan to the Department of Information Systems specifying the ways that funding will be spent in the program. NWACC sent in its distance learning plan along with the technology plan required by the state. The plan was sent as an appendix to the institutional technology plan and, in addition, all aspects of distance learning affecting institutional technology were addressed in its plan.

The state has mandated the implementation of distance learning in every school district in the state of Arkansas. Unfortunately the bill establishing this plan is contingent on funding, which is unlikely to this specific purpose in the near future.

A new administrative position entitled "Director of Distance Learning" has been approved and took place in July of 1999. This will free up one additional faculty position that until now I have been occupying.

Finally, although not specifically legislative, the Board of Education for Arkansas has approved a new set of standards for distance learning in the K-12 schools. These standards are widely believed to favor the implementation of distance learning in the schools, particularly programs from higher education.

State Compressed Video Network (Starnet)

The state compressed video network has been expanded and upgraded to accommodate the additional users. The original infrastructure was designed to accommodate about 32-40 users. The state network now has over 150 sites. The new and expanded infrastructure has worked to minimize conflicts. In addition, the speed of the network has been increased from 336 KBPS to 386 KBPS

The state transferred scheduling responsibilities to an arm of Southwestern Bell based in St. Louis. This team is now fully responsible for scheduling for the entire state of Arkansas' educational network. In order to obtain this service, ADE, ADHE, and the University of Arkansas system had to contribute in the amount of \$1.8 million. In order to continue to provide these services, the line charges for each site will increase by \$100 per month as of July 2000. If funds are not located to subsidize these costs, a substantial increase in monthly line charges could occur in July 2001. The present strategy of the Starnet (Video Users Group) is to lobby the legislature for line item funding or an interim amount to cover the support of the infrastructure.

I remain the Secretary for Starnet for 1999-2000.

Other Duties and Responsibilities

This section details miscellaneous on campus duties not directly related to the support of distance learning classes.

College and Community Satellite Downlinks

NWACC has continued to use the satellite receiving equipment to downlink programming as available from satellite broadcasters. Much of this broadcasting comes from PBS's Adult Learning Satellite Services division, the National Guard Counter Drug Task Force, and other agencies that regularly produce or sponsor programming, but some of it is ad-hoc as well. The following list shows all programming received for the period of July 1, 1999 to June 30th 2000:

10/16/99	Towards a Society for All Ages (UMTC)	Nursing Faculty and Students
11/4/99	PBS/ALS and NACADA Advising Conference	Student Services and Faculty
11/18/99	PBS Project Access Satellite Downlink	Student Services/Library
12/2/99	PBA/ALS Online Testing Broadcast	Faculty/Student Services
3/30/00	Street Gangs Satellite Downlink (NGCDTF)	Criminal Justice
4/13/00	Narcotics Informants, How and Why You Should Evaluate Them (NGCDTF)	Criminal Justice
4/27/00	PBS/ALS GED 2002	Adult Education
5/25/00	PBS/ALS Using Workplace Essential Skills	Adult Education
8/2/00	Meth: Cookbook for Prevention (NGCDTF)	Criminal Justice

Some of the broadcasts were shown live and taped, whereas others were only taped due to either the unavailability of a viewing room or scheduling conflicts for the intended audience.

A schedule of available free programming has been provided to NWACC faculty, administration, and staff for future reference in an attempt to encourage greater use of the equipment.

Cable Television

In addition to Distance Learning and Satellite reception, I am also the primary liaison between NWACC and Cox Communications, the local cable television provider. Cox has verbally agreed to assist us in distributing our satellite and other signals through the college cable system that was activated last year. This means that, upon completion, we will be able to send a satellite broadcast to any room in the CEF with cable access.

In addition, plans are to use an existing computer with Power Point software, to set up a running message board for the college at the CEF. This message board will be run through one of the auxiliary channels now reserved for a VCR from the satellite equipment. Plans consist of creating a weekly message system similar to those seen on local cable television. This method will be significantly less expensive than a specialized system and will use some of the existing equipment on-campus as well. Student Services has agreed to provide some of the new equipment necessary to implement this plan. In addition, they have planned to purchase monitors and brackets for key traffic areas in the CEF where the message board and cable TV will be available, including the Cashier's window area, the Student Services/Registrar waiting room, the Lobby, etc... Student Services has expressed a wish to add locations but this will depend on whether the money can be found to support additional outlets.

Conferences, Presentations, and Travel

The following is a list of conferences and presentations that I have been involved with from July 1999 through June 2000.

July 26, 1999 - Session on Distance Learning for the Electronic Learning Environment Institute (AETN and Arkansas Leadership Academy). Delivered by videoconference from NWACC to Fairfield Bay, AR.

Sept. 16-17, 1999 - ACCESS Arkansas Meetings, Pulaski Technical College, North Little Rock, AR. These meetings were to explore the direction of ACCESS Arkansas and were attended by representatives from the participating colleges.

Dec. 20, 1999 - ACCESS Arkansas Task Force Meeting- Little Rock, AR- ADHE Building. I attended as a representative for Dr. Hodges.

Feb. 25, 2000 - Planning Meeting for the Electronic Learning Environment Institute, Conway, AR

Apr. 14, 2000 - UAMS Distance Learning Conference, Little Rock, AR - Attendee

June 19-20, 2000 - Workforce Development Training Consortium Meetings, SAU-Tech, Camden, AR. I was asked to attend by the Workforce Development Consortium Director Steve Lease to network with participants as a consultant on distance learning issues.

Conclusion

The growth of Distance Learning at NWACC has seen some increases, notably in the area of World Wide Web based classes. There seems to be a core group of faculty at NWACC who have an interest in teaching on the WWW. It remains to be seen if this will translate into a wide variety of courses being offered in the format, perhaps enough to create an online degree plan. To reach such a goal will take coordination though and will require divisions to proactively create courses for the WWW. In the meantime, courses provided from other institutions via ACCESS Arkansas will provide a number of core course requirements for the AA degree. Indeed, we are growing close to the time when we will see the first student to gain their AA by such means.

On the other hand, compressed video is struggling. One cause of this struggle is the relatively limited access to other sites because of a lack of equipment in the case of the school districts (Lincoln and Springdale excepted) or because of the problems and costs involved in going to other higher education institutions. In addition, some opportunities have been missed due to limitations at NWACC, particularly in the area of Step Ahead classes. It seems the only way to overcome this is to encourage the various departments to plan for distance learning classes. At present, this will take time with some areas. In the meantime, there are still some opportunities for growth. The ACTA Agricultural consortium is starting to offer classes by interactive video. There is still hope for the articulation agreement with Arkansas Tech in Emergency Management to produce classes, and we are going to explore the possibility of exchanging foreign language courses with other schools in the upcoming months.

The telecourses and self directed study courses seem to fit a niche for some instructors, primarily in that the technological skill requirements to run such courses are marginally lower than compressed video or WWW. This niche also serves a shrinking percentage of the student population that does not have regular access to the WWW. In time though, we can expect this audience to disappear, especially when NWACC is able to provide an open access computer lab for all students. Even so, these classes offer an alternative to WWW and compressed video that some students will prefer. It remains to be seen whether or not there will be the interest from the departments and faculty that will see these areas grow.

I am optimistic that distance learning can continue to grow at NWACC and that in doing so, we will be able to reach parts of our community that heretofore were unable to participate. We must find new ways to recognize and meet the needs of this population, and must be willing to stretch in these new directions, if the promise of learning offered by NWACC is to become meaningful to all the citizens of our fair community.

Clint Brooks

Distance Learning Coordinator,
NorthWest Arkansas Community College
August 9, 2000

Tables of Distance Learning Classes

Compressed Interactive Video

Fall 1999

Class	Local Enrollment	Remote Enrollment	Total Enrollment	Withdrawals
Air Force Today	Did not make	Did not make	Did not make	NA
Beginning Algebra - UAF	20	5	25	7
Development of Air Power	Did not make	Did not make	Did not make	NA
Intermediate Algebra - Jones Ctr.	20	9	29	9
Prealgebra- UAF	NA	Did not make	NA	NA
Western Civ I- Lincoln	17	6 (5 Step Ahead, 1 reg)	23	4
Totals	57	20	77	20

Spring 2000

Class	Local Enrollment	Remote Enrollment	Total Enrollment	Withdrawals
Air Force Today	Did not make	Did not make	Did not make	NA
Development of Air Power	Did not make	Did not make	Did not make	NA
Beginning Algebra - Jones Ctr.	11	12	23	4 (2 NWACC, 2 JCF)
Western Civ II- Lincoln	4	5 Step Ahead	9	0
Totals	15	17	32	4

Totals 1999-2000

Classes	Local Enrollment	Remote Enrollment	Total Enrollment	Withdrawals
10	72	37	109	24

Self Directed Study

Fall 1999

Class	Enrollment	Withdrawals
Business Communications	23	2
Intro to OSHA	7	1
World Literature I	23	2
Totals	53	5

Spring 2000

Class	Enrollment	Withdrawals
Business Communications	16	0
Database Management (Access)	17	3
World Literature I	26	5 (also 5 incompletes)
Totals	59	8

Totals 1999-2000

Classes	Enrollment	Withdrawals
6	112	13

Telecourses

Fall 1999

Class	Enrollment	Withdrawals
General Psychology	19	1
General Sociology	19	4
Totals	38	5

Spring 2000

Class	Enrollment	Withdrawals
General Psychology	24	7
General Sociology	22	2
Totals	46	9

Total 1999-2000

Classes	Enrollment	Withdrawals
4	84	14

WWW Based Courses

Spring 2000 (and Totals 1999-2000)

Class	Enrollment	Withdrawals
Art Appreciation	13	1
Basic HTML Programming	22	3
College Chemistry I	4	0
English Composition II	20	4
Internet Resourcing	20	3
Totals	79	11

1999-2000 Distance Learning Committee

Clint Brooks, Chair - Distance Learning Coordinator

Jim Barnsley - Learning Lab Supervisor

Randy Bray - CTC Coordinator

Don Butcher - Quality Management Coordinator, Business and Industry*

Troy Cash - Faculty, Computer Information

Bob Cole - Dean of Institutional Technology*

Susan Denman - Life Development Center Advisor; Testing Center Coordinator

Cindy Hammons - OSHA/EPA Environmental Regulations, Safety and Hazardous Materials

Dr. Conrad Krauft - Faculty, Psychology; Lead Faculty, Social Sciences

Dr. Linda Lovell - Faculty, Library and English

Angela Peace - Faculty, Computer Information

Kim Purdy - Document Examiner I; Student Services Webmaster

Dr. Jerry Vervack - Assistant Vice President for Learning; Division Chair, Social Sciences

Marjorie Whitmore - Faculty, Mathematics

Dr. Guangqin Xu - Faculty, Western Civilization

* No longer employed at NWACC