



NorthWest Arkansas Community College Distance Learning Report 1998-99

Clint Brooks
Distance Learning Coordinator



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Introduction and Acknowledgements

The Distance Learning Program at NorthWest Arkansas Community College has seen steady but slow growth over the past year. A number of distance learning initiatives have been introduced but remain in either the consideration or development stage. Compressed video and Internet courses are especially affected by this trend. Compressed video at NWACC especially seems to be at a crossroads as the initial programs targeted for this medium have either started to wane (developmental math at the U of A) or never caught on (AFROTC courses at U of A). New programs are looming ahead but much work is still left to be done before they can demonstrate success. The other two distance learning types, telecourses and self-directed study have met with mixed success. Students seem to enjoy the independence but simultaneously struggle with it in terms of completing objectives and retention is a key issue, even in the more successful classes. In addition, NWACC is incorporating some old technologies at last, as cable and satellite television are now available to the Central Educational Facility.

Acknowledgements go to all those who support and have supported the distance learning program through these continuing growing pains. The administration, faculty, and staff, and especially the students who have pioneered distance learning at NWACC with enthusiasm, all deserve thanks and appreciation. Special Thanks to Dr. Karen Hodges, Paul Osborn, Dr. Jerry Vervack and the Social Sciences Department, Victoria McClendon, Jim Barnsley, and the Academic Skills/Learning Lab Department, Louise Lamb and the Library staff, Greg Fike, Grant Hambrick, Fiscal Affairs, Student Services, Bob Cole and the technology staff, and Gerry Weatherford for their additional help with the program. The distance learning faculty deserve special thanks as they have put in extra time and effort to provide students with these new learning opportunities. Here's hoping their numbers grow.

This report is abbreviated compared to the two previous reports. An effort has been made to make the report as concise as possible for readability and practical use. Future plans are to develop semester reports for the Distance Education Committee and combine them into an annual report for the College. A copy of this report will be made available to The Board of Trustees, College President Dr. Bob Burns, Vice-President for Academic Affairs Dr. Karen Hodges, Assistant Vice-President for Extended Learning Paul Osborn and members of the Distance Education Committee. All other interested parties may request a copy of this report from Clint Brooks, Distance Learning Coordinator, (501) 619-4382 or cbrooks@nwacc.cc.ar.us. Plans are to post this report online at the NWACC Distance Learning Web Site (<http://labs.nwacc.cc.ar.us/disted/>) in the near future.

Administrative

The Distance Learning program is a department of Academic Affairs and is directly run by the Distance Learning Coordinator. The department is overseen by the Assistant Vice President for Extended Learning, who reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. In addition, the NWACC Distance Education Committee serves as an advisory and support committee, reviewing distance learning issues and policies and making appropriate recommendations.

5 Year DE Plan

The Distance Education Committee has approved an updated version of a Five-Year Plan for Distance Learning. This plan sets the goals and objectives for the department over a five year period, focusing especially on the initial two years of the plan. This plan will be annually modified to meet the demands of changing technologies as well as state, community and institutional priorities. At the time of this writing, the plan is awaiting official approval by the Academic Affairs department.

Equipment and Facilities

A number of equipment and facilities changes have occurred in the last year. The following are the most notable.

Equipment Purchases and Facility Changes

Over the fiscal year 1998-99 NWACC made a number of purchases aimed at improving our ability to provide distance learning experiences. The primary purchases were in the area of satellite technology, cable television, and online education.

NWACC has procured a satellite receiver system under a contract (sealed bid) with Learnsat Systems, Inc. of Stillwater, OK. The system consists of two satellite receivers, an analog/digital receiver that can receive C and Ku band transmissions and is connected to a steerable 3 meter dish, and a digital receiver that is Ku only and is connected to a fixed 1.5 meter dish. The fixed dish is aimed at GE-3 Ku in order to receive signals originating from PBS/ALSS (Adult Learning Satellite Services). The steerable dish can receive a variety of independent and free programming. Two VCRs are also part of the system. The equipment is stored in CEF 1213. The system has been set up to be accessed through the internal cable as channels 91, 93, 100, and 102, depending on the source receiver or VCR.

NWACC has signed a contract with TCA Cable to provide cable television to the Central Educational Facility. A total of 28 drops will be set up in the building initially. Until these are all in place, TCA will bill us for drops in use on a monthly basis. The cable service chosen is extended service, which includes a number of educationally oriented channels as well as news programming.

NWACC has joined ACCESS Arkansas, a consortium of two-year colleges in the state, to provide online (World Wide Web based) classes to the community, particularly targeting those students who are outside the traditional student population in terms of work/family schedule and would benefit from the independent nature of these types of courses. As part of this agreement, NWACC has licensed the web course development software Web CT on an annual basis. The Unix version of the software was chosen as other versions were still in Beta. In order to host the Unix version, NWACC has leased a server from IPA of Ft. Smith, AR. The lease is on a monthly basis and can be altered or terminated at the end of any given semester or sooner if necessary. The server is located off campus at IPA.

In addition to the above, the compressed interactive video equipment on loan from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville has been donated to NWACC. It is presently located in CEF 1223.

Planned Equipment Purchases and Facility Changes

NWACC plans to upgrade the compressed interactive video equipment in 1223 under the standing offer from the manufacturer VTEL. The upgrade will replace the present Media Max unit with a TC series unit with Windows 95. A camera is part of the upgrade as are two monitors and additional equipment needed to run the unit. The upgrade will save \$10,000 to \$15,000 over the cost of a new unit alone. In addition, the new unit will be under warranty for one year, which will save the annual warranty and service contract cost of approximately \$6500 for the Media Max for 1999-2000. CEF will likely be reconfigured when the upgrade occurs.

Budgetary Information

Budget for 1999-2000

Below is the Maintenance and Overhead budget submission for fiscal year 1999-2000. Some details will be altered due to the budget approval process results, as well as changes occurring in the details of individual purchases. **The final approved Maintenance and Overhead budget for Distance Learning is \$37,618.** Priority Items for the approved budget amount are marked with a *.

Item/Category	Est. Monthly Amount	Est. Annual Amount
Maintenance and Operations Expenses		
Office Expenses		
Phone/Long Distance*	\$25	\$300.00
Copying*	\$50	\$600.00
Postage*	\$10	\$120.00
Supplies-Internal*		\$150.00
Supplies-External*		\$100.00
Computer Equipment under \$500		
Computer Hardware < \$500		\$200.00
Computer Software		\$200.00
Computer Equipment over \$500		
Computer Hardware > \$500*	NA	\$29,456.00
53" monitors	NA	\$4,398.00
Cables and Amps for Upgrade*	NA	\$1,124.95
Sony Camera	NA	\$2,000.00
Travel		
Travel-Lodging		\$450.00
Travel-Plane		\$450.00
Travel-Meals		\$150.00
Travel-Private Vehicle*		\$700.00
Dues, Fees, Publicity, and Advertising		
Advertising*		\$500.00
Conference Registration Fees	NA	\$500.00
Fees-Telecourses*		\$2,700.00
Fees-Satellite Conf. Licenses*		\$1,500.00
Fees-Telecourse Consortium*		\$150.00
Fees-Vtel Maintenance and Service	NA	\$6,814.00
Printing Expenses*		\$250.00
Web CT License*		\$1,000.00
Grand Total		\$53,812.95

Classes

Classes Conducted

The following section is a brief description of the classes that were offered this year as distance learning and any important information regarding them.

CIV (Compressed Interactive Video)

Classes by Compressed Interactive Video are at a crossroads. The initial programs targeted as compressed video have not developed as planned. The developmental math classes worked through the University of Arkansas have not grown and in fact did not make this past semester. Similarly, numbers are small for the fall and the classes are in danger of not making. A likely reason is the University's shift in policy regarding math entrance standards and also the University math department's attempt to address the same deficiencies NWACC classes are aimed at through its own tutorial software in the MATH 0003 classes. The AFROTC classes from the University of Arkansas have not made due to small numbers in the program overall.

The Spring Beginning Algebra class offered in the evening to the Jones Center at Springdale made after the one the previous fall failed to. Its follow-up Intermediate Algebra is likely to make as well. The class itself went well with the exception of several atypical technical difficulties, which resulted in some lost class time. Despite this, students at Springdale confided to the instructor that they would readily take a videoconferencing class again.

An initial Step Ahead class in American History was offered to Lincoln High School but had no applicants due to a number of factors, the largest being a preference for other classes, particularly Western Civilization which is being offered fall 1999 (see below).

Classes offered 1998-99 (made classes only): Beginning Algebra, Prealgebra

In addition, NWACC facilitated a JBU Advance class in Business Communications by videoconference to two sites (NWACC and Pulaski Technical Institute). JBU is now considering purchasing interactive video systems.

Telecourses

NWACC offered courses in Psychology and Sociology as telecourses for 1998-99. The courses consistently made but retention and participation are large issues. Despite printed instructions and an on site orientation session, a number of students were tardy or delinquent in taking their exams at the new NWACC Testing Center. While the limited evening hours of the Testing Center may have been an issue, more likely, students are struggling with the independence that telecourses offer. Plans are being made to incorporate more structure and dialogue into these classes.

Self-Directed Study

NWACC offered one of these classes, World Literature I, taught by Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Karen Hodges. While retention is still an issue here, the class was successful both semesters it was offered and has a steady enrollment.

Classes Planned

CIV (Compressed Interactive Video)

While the Academic Skills offerings to Fayetteville have not produced large numbers, the class offerings to the Jones Center in Springdale, Arkansas have pulled in respectable numbers (5-7 per class at the remote location) with the exception of the fall 98 semester when the class did not make. Classes to both locations are still being offered this fall but the times have changed for the Fayetteville classes. They have been moved to the mornings in the hope that some Fayetteville based NWACC students will take advantage of them.

Lincoln has agreed to an initial Step Ahead class in Western Civilization I for fall 99 (with II to follow in the spring). This has the possibility of expanding to additional offerings depending on the needs of Lincoln's Step Ahead student population and should serve as an excellent pilot for additional courses to other area schools as the state begins to fund distance learning in the public schools as mandated by recent legislation.

Other possibilities for 1999-2000 include a planned Women's Health course, taught by Nursing faculty Barbara Maybury, Agriculture and Science courses as part of the state agricultural educational consortium, and possibly developing a respiratory therapy degree program with UAMS for a four year degree for students gaining their two-year degree at NWACC. Such a program would likely incorporate compressed interactive video and is being explored by the Allied Health department. As always, any administrative use of the compressed video network is strongly encouraged as well.

Telecourses

Plans are at present to continue the Psychology and Sociology courses and add courses as interested instructors come on. This is directed at provide key core class work towards a two-year degree for students unable to attend traditional classes. The possibility exists of incorporating online class pages as provided by the telecourse producers to supplement and expand the telecourse offerings. Plans for fall 99 and spring 2000 include working on the structure and dialogue content of these classes to promote more teacher-learner interaction and improve learner progress. This will be accomplished in part through the use of the Web CT software tools (bulletin board, chat, etc...).

Self-Directed Study

Two new Self-Directed Study classes are being offered for fall 99 (along with the World Literature I course): Business Communication, taught by Julie Crofoot, and OSHA, taught by Cindy Hammons. Plans are to incorporate tools from the licensed Web CT software (bulletin board, chat room, internal e-mail) in each of these classes. The Self-Directed Study courses may ultimately serve as springboards to online classes as many of the materials are similar and much of the information in a Self-directed Study handout packet is reproduced online on the class page.

Internet/Web-Based

NWACC is in the early stages of developing/obtaining online course materials for the World Wide Web. While some of the courses will be offered via Access Arkansas, others will likely be independent NWACC offerings, especially if they do not receive Access Arkansas approval for the consortium. Cindy Hammons OSHA class, while labeled as a Self-Directed Study course for the fall, is targeted to become an online class in the spring. Other possible classes include Psychology, Art Appreciation and English Composition. Online courses may be offered as fully online or partially online. Linda Lovell of the Library is offering training in developing course companion web sites for regular classes. This will add to the skill level of the faculty regarding online publishing and development, which will contribute towards the further development of online classes. A number of issues remain to be solved, especially support issues for students and student services.

ACCESS Arkansas

ACCESS Arkansas (Access to College Courses for Every Student Statewide, Arkansas) is the consortium of two-year schools formed in the summer of 1998 to develop, offer, and promote online courses with the ultimate goal of providing an two-year degree via online courses. NWACC is an active member but does not expect to offer classes until the spring of 2000. At present, only certain classes in the ACCESS catalogue of courses will likely be offered for that initial semester with more to come. A number of issues still remain to be worked out, particularly admissions and student services issues. Plans are for steady growth as part of the consortium. NWACC is using the consortium chosen web course development tool Web CT, licensed through the consortium.

Training

NWACC continues to offer individualized training for instructors teaching classes by compressed interactive video as well as support and consultation for all distance learning types. The NCA Self-Study Distance Education Committee recommended increased training and consultation for telecourses and self-directed study courses. The department is presently working towards that end.

In addition to the above training, NWACC has developed training for instructors planning to develop or teach online classes. The training consists of a 3 and 1/2 hour evaluation and exploration of issues related to the use of the World Wide Web as an instructional tool (including copyright, instructional design, support issues, presentation, etc...) and an 4 and 1/2 hour overview of the primary software tool for course designers: Web CT. Cindy Hammons is the faculty member assisting the department with this training by presenting the entire Web CT overview (in accordance with ACCESS Arkansas plans to have faculty train faculty) with assistance from the Distance Learning Department.

The Distance Learning Department also provides assistance when possible to instructors and staff in the use of various related technologies, including computer software. This is usually done in an informal process on demand.

Also, Clint Brooks, NWACC Distance Learning Coordinator, has continued to participate in state level compressed video training initiatives. The most recent of these was a training seminar sponsored by the Arkansas Leadership Academy where he served as a trainer/technician. There are also plans to assist with AETN and the Arkansas Leadership Academy's Electronic Learning Environment Institutes as a demo site, with the possibility of providing onsite presentations. NWACC has participated in one demo session already in June 1999.

NCA Self Study

NWACC has been preparing a Self-Study for the North Central Association of Schools in preparation for our continued accreditation visit in the fall of 1999. One of the committees in the self-study focused on Distance Education. The chair of the committee was Clint Brooks, the Distance Learning Coordinator. The committee focused on the NCA-CIHE Guidelines for Distance Education and reached a number of conclusions detailed in the self-study as well as recommendations for the program. Those recommendations not acted on by the fall semester will be presented to the standing Distance Education Committee as candidates for inclusion into the 5-Year Plan. The recommendations focus on training, student interactivity, and student information/promotion.

Local Initiatives and Business

Local initiatives associated with the Distance Learning Department included an offer from the Rogers School District to partner on a grant. NWACC's primary responsibility would have been for training teachers to use compressed interactive video. The grant in question was not awarded to Rogers. The other local issue regards private leasing of distance learning facilities and has yet to be fully resolved. The central issue is "should NWACC allow businesses and organizations to use its distance learning equipment (for a pre-determined fee) or not?" It is likely that we will be approached in the future in regards to this issue. There has already been an initial request, although it was resolved due to the fact that the equipment in question (satellite receiver system) was not yet operational.

State Level Initiatives and Business

State Compressed Video Network

Statewide, Arkansas' Higher Educational Interactive Video Network has reached a crossroads. The network, which was originally conceived and designed for approximately 30 user sites, now has over 100 and growing. In addition to the terrific strain this places on the network infrastructure, the network management system is also overtaxed. Some background is in order. Initially, when the network was instituted, the state was to handle management of the network via the appropriate state agency at the time, The Department of Computer Services. The state was unprepared to tackle this task at the time, so the responsibility was taken up by Southwestern Bell with the caveat that ultimately it would transfer back to the state or another management team in the future. Fast forward to the present: SW Bell is looking to remove itself from the management of the video network. The state is faced with two central options: Either take over the management of the network by developing equipment and personnel to handle the job through the Department of Information Systems, or turn the job over to an independent management team at a cost to the user sites. Each solution likely entails increased user costs.

In addition to the network management issues, the primary issue involving the network is the state commitment towards the improvement of the network telecommunications infrastructure. Approximately \$7 million has been allocated for the improvement of the infrastructure, which will consist of the addition of a number of high speed DS3 lines through strategically located portions of the state (LR to Fayetteville, LR to Pine Bluff, etc...) with the goal of providing access to these backbone pipelines to as many local sites as possible. This should speed up telecommunications service to state institutions.

Also, the state video network is slowly upgrading its video quality and network standards to match users around the nation and internationally, which should promote more interstate telecommunications. The state network is now uniformly connecting using the H.221 connection protocol, which will allow non-VTEL videoconferencing units to participate in general conferences. Plans are to marginally improve the bandwidth of the network in the near future from 336 KBPS to 384 KBPS. The improvement in video quality will be marginal but the improvement in bandwidth should help minimize communications errors to a small degree.

Finally, NWACC's Distance Learning Coordinator, Clint Brooks, was re-elected to another two-year post as Secretary for the state video users group STARNET.

ACCESS Arkansas

NWACC's participation in ACCESS Arkansas has already been described in this report under "Planned Classes/Internet/Web Based".

The consortium plans to offer some classes initially in the fall of 1999, although some institutions (notably SEARK) offered classes in the spring of 1999. The ultimate goal of the consortium is to make a two-year degree available to any student in Arkansas via the Internet. Agreements with Web CT and Prentice Hall are in place towards the development and procurement of online curricular materials.

What remains to be seen is how the consortium deals with issues of student support between colleges, particularly where students in one part of the state take classes from an institution in another part of the state. What kind of support they are entitled to, who will provide it and how, are issues that go to the heart of whether or not the consortium will be a unified body of schools offering courses and support cooperatively, or a loose confederation of schools working for the most part independently, with the exception of marketing and licensing. Ownership issues for developed courses have not been fully worked out yet and there has been discussion among the ACCESS Arkansas Steering Committee of a fee to be charged for ACCESS AR courses, which would be additional to Publisher's fees and would conflict with our own NWACC Distance Learning fee (although it would likely be incorporated in the DE fee).

Access Arkansas has already accomplished much by getting the two-year schools into the online arena, and well ahead of many of the four-year institutions. (The University of Arkansas at Fayetteville recently signed on as a Web CT licensee). Whatever occurs in the immediate future has at least the potential to completely change the face of education statewide. However, NWACC will likely move slowly, especially until the nature of the relationship among the consortium schools, especially the responsibilities of the schools, is defined more clearly than at present.

USDLA/ARDLA

The United States Distance Learning Association has approved a state chapter of its organization for the state of Arkansas. The Arkansas chapter is called the Arkansas Distance Learning Association (ARDLA) and has approved a constitution and bylaws and began accepting members. The Association will promote and educate on distance learning in Arkansas. In exchange for designing, hosting and maintaining the ARDLA web site, NWACC has been given a free institutional membership in ARDLA. This membership includes four individual memberships and is a value of \$100. NWACC members of ARDLA are Clint Brooks, Paul Osborn, Victoria McClendon, and Dr. Conrad Krauft.

ARDLA plans to host an annual convention, the inaugural edition of which will be in September 1999 at Fairfield Bay, Arkansas.

Arkansas Telecourse Consortium

The Arkansas Telecourse Consortium is the body that administrates telecourse offerings through AETN, including the semester schedule of broadcast course offerings. NWACC Distance Learning Coordinator Clint Brooks was named to the Executive Committee in fall 1998. Executive Committee members have the primary responsibility of identifying courses for the broadcast schedule each semester and coordinating meetings of the general membership.

Legislation

Two bills passed by the Arkansas Legislature at the 1999 General Session may have an impact directly on the Distance Learning Program at NWACC.

The first is Act 1297 which states in part "No funds appropriated for any state agency, board, office, commission or institution shall be used for the technological implementation of distance learning until the plan for the spending of such funds for distance learning technology has been prepared by the state agency, board, office, commission or institution and submitted to the Department of Information Systems'

Office of Information Technology." The general interpretation of the bill has so far been that DIS will merely serve in an oversight capacity rather than approving specific programs and budgets. NWACC's Distance Learning Plan is part of the Overall Technology Plan submitted to DIS, so we may already have taken the appropriate steps in this matter, although more consultation may be needed with DIS.

The second is Act 1083, which states that "Distance learning shall be available to one hundred (100) elementary and secondary public schools in the state by August 1, 2000. Distance learning shall be available to all school districts in the state by August 1, 2004." and " The Department of Higher Education shall oversee and coordinate the implementation of distance learning in two (2) year colleges, four (4) year institutions of higher learning and universities in the state. " This Act implies two key developments. First, that the public schools will obtain distance learning in the near future. This will likely be in the form of videoconferencing equipment since the state has already invested in this kind of equipment in the educational service cooperatives. The potential for Step Ahead courses from NWACC to local districts by compressed interactive video is great. Second, the coordination of distance learning statewide would be a positive move as it would maximize the use of the technology already available by applying it where most needed and facilitating greater cooperation among institutions. Site costs and other factors that have resulted from the independent development of distance learning throughout the state will have to be addressed as will training and services. However, this act offers some promise. It should be noted that the Act bears some strong similarity to Act 965 from the 1997 session.

Other Duties and Responsibilities

Graphic Design Class

Distance Learning Coordinator Clint Brooks served for the second straight fall as a guest lecturer in the Advanced Graphic Design class taught by Deborah Terry. Responsibilities included lecturing on HTML and web page development, as well as assessment and review of student web page designs and projects. Time spent with the class was approximately 1 and 1/2 to 2 hours per week.

College and Community Satellite Downlinks

The Distance Learning Department has assumed responsibility for the technical facilitation of all satellite downlinks and equipment maintenance. The inaugural satellite conference using the equipment was a PBS sponsored, Palomar College production called "Tools for Transformation: Making the Learning Paradigm a Reality". This conference focused upon the growing learning paradigm and how to practically implement it at a educational institution. This program fit well with the theme of our NCA Self-Study, "Positioning NWACC As A Learning College". Greg Fike, Director of Adult Education facilitated the conference. The Distance Learning Department also facilitated the Workforce Development Institute's Licensing of "Small Business 2000" by downlinking and videotaping the program.

In addition to this, the department has handled the organization and promotion of at least two community oriented satellite events in the past year and technically facilitated a third. **UMTC's Kids, Guns, Violence: How to Make a Difference**, and **Mid South Sky School** were both satellite downlinks in which the Distance Learning Department provided press release materials to the local media, contacted potential participants, and reproduced or created materials for the conference. A number of other departments contributed to these efforts as well, including Greg Fike, Adult Education Director, who facilitated the "Kids..." conference, Jim Barnsley of the Learning Lab, Steve Cooper of the Music department, and Bob Cole of the Informational Technology department who provided equipment for the broadcasts. Also, Fiscal Affairs and Student Services who helped facilitate refreshments for Sky School (from a stipend offered by the producers of the conference). The UMTC broadcast was targeted at addressing youth violence in the community and was shown in the wake of the Columbine shootings in Colorado. The Mid South broadcast was a nationally known conference on alcohol and drug addiction

targeted at professionals and foster parents working with individuals with these addictions. Attendance for both conferences was small to fair but concentrated with individuals for which the information was vital.

The **AETN: Ready to Learn**, conference was a project aimed at local early childhood professionals and focused on how Public Television could help prepare preschoolers for their educational careers as students. AETN handled all publicity and enrollment and even provide a facilitator. NWACC provided a room and technical coordination of the event at our site.

Plans are to continue to target and downlink broadcasts that can contribute to providing education and information to the community, both at large and to specific groups within that serve the larger community. Needs that will better facilitate this objective include: A liaison to the community to contact community groups in advance of broadcasts as well as communicate with them to better target broadcast that will serve their needs; a committee or body of community representatives to aid in the selection of broadcasts; funds for advertising to the community.

Conferences, Presentations, and Travel

Conferences and other travel this year for the Distance Learning Coordinator included the ACCESS ARKANSAS follow-up meeting in August 1998 to select software (Web CT) and finalize initial procedures and plans. The event was a Fairfield Bay, AR. Also included was participation as a trainer and technician at the Arkansas Leadership Academy's Interactive Video Seminar. Training presentations given by the DLC were a co-presentation on the operation of the VTEL TC videoconferencing unit and a brainstorming session on support for videoconference classes. This event was also held at Fairfield Bay, AR (October 1998). Also included was participation at the Annual Video Users/Presenters Conference in Hot Springs, AR (November 1998), a trip to AETN for taping of a state produced program on distance learning on which the DLC served as a panelist (January 1999- show broadcast that month), another trip to Conway to review Prentice-Hall courseware for ACCESS AR (February 1999), A trip to Hot Springs for an Arkansas Telecourse Consortium Executive Committee Meeting (October 1998), and a two day trip to North Little Rock for training in the use of Web CT (May 1999).

Finally, The Distance Learning Coordinator Clint Brooks, Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Karen Hodges, and Academic Skills Chair Victoria McClendon made an appearance on Dr. James Swartz's Saturday morning radio show "Focus on Education"(KFAY 1030, Fayetteville) to discuss Distance Learning at NWACC. The appearance was on September 12, 1998.

Conclusion

Slowly but surely, distance learning opportunities are opening up throughout the state of Arkansas and will continue to grow over the next five years. The proliferation of distance learning to the public schools will increase cooperative opportunities with them, while also introducing the concept of distance learning to students at an earlier age, aiding in the preparation they will need to use it effectively in college, and breaking down resistance among some faculty and staff to the new delivery modes.

NWACC must continue to position ourselves to be a key part of this growth. By offering curriculum through distance learning technologies and developing delivery materials for these technologies, we continued to lead in our community in the concept that learning should be available to all members of the community and that educational institutions should provide this learning in whatever way is possible. The increased use of the World Wide Web, the improvements in state network infrastructure, the state commitment to K-12 distance learning, and other developments should serve as encouragement to further focus our attention in this area and more importantly, to broaden our commitment, especially in terms of the amount of the College curriculum that is to be offered using these technologies.

Growth in the past year has been slow and there have been growing pains, including uncertainty and struggles from students to adjust to the different styles of learning engendered by distance learning, as

well as instructor uncertainty as we delve into new learning environments, with their own sets of new challenges.

If we continue to focus on meeting the needs of students and producing the finest educational product possible, these technologies will reach a greater number of students, students who might otherwise be unable to participate in the Community College, and we will see growth, not simply in numbers but in opportunities.

**Clint Brooks,
Distance Learning Coordinator
July 1, 1999**

Appendix A

Table of Distance Learning Classes for 1998-99
 (CIV courses include local students- on campus)

Semester	Subject	Course	CRN	Title	Students	A-C	D	F	W
Sum II 1998	ACSK	0023	41015/ 41016	Beginning Algebra- CIV	18	15	1	1	1
Fall 1998	ACSK	0013	11519/ 11279	Prealgebra- CIV	15	8	1	4	2
Fall 1998	ACSK	0023	11285/ 11341	Beginning Algebra- CIV	20	9	3	8	1
Fall 1998	ENGL	2213	11090	World Literature I- Self Directed Study	16 (includes 2 Inc.)	8	0	4	2
Fall 1998	PSYC	2003	11627	General Psychology- Telecourse	21	13	1	3	4
Fall 1998	SOCI	2013	11631	General Sociology- Telecourse	20 (includes 1 Inc.)	9	0	5	5
Spring 1999	ACSK	0103	23111/ 23327	Beginning Algebra	20	14	0	4	2
Spring 1999	ENGL	2213	23408	World Literature I- Self Directed Study	27 (includes 6 Inc.)	13	0	4	4
Spring 1999	PSYC	2003	23449	General Psychology- Telecourse	13	5	0	3	5
Spring 1999	SOCI	2013	23452	General Sociology- Telecourse	16	6	0	3	7
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Totals CIV	4				73	46	5	17	6
Totals Telecourse	4				70 (includes 1 Inc.)	33	1	14	21
Totals Self-Directed Study	2				43 (includes 8 Inc.)	21	0	8	6
Grand Totals	10				186	100	6	39	33