

**OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY  
DISTANCE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION  
A CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED GRANT  
WITH FIPSE OVERSIGHT**

**YEARLY REPORT - JUNE 1999 THRU JUNE 2000**



**INTRODUCTION**

In June of 1999, Oregon State University was awarded a three-year Congressionally Directed Grant that operates under the oversight of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). This Grant is dedicated to the development and delivery of four (4) baccalaureate level degree programs and four (4) graduate level degree programs (Table 1).

Table 1. Distance Education Degree Programs

<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Degree</b>
	Liberal Studies
	Natural Resources
	Environmental Sciences
	General Agriculture
<b>Graduate</b>	<b>Degree</b>
	Nutrition and Food Management
	Interdisciplinary Studies
	Electrical Engineering
	Teacher Education/Preparation/Certification

The four undergraduate programs that are being developed and delivered through this project are baccalaureate completion programs. They are made up of upper division courses related to the four majors. Students admitted to these distance delivered programs are expected to have completed the lower division courses at a community college or through a different institution prior to matriculating into the OSU program. The undergraduate programs (shown in Table 1 above) are: Liberal Studies, Natural Resources, Environmental Sciences, and General Agriculture.

The graduate level programs that were originally proposed for development and delivery through this project are: Nutrition and Food Management, Interdisciplinary Studies, Electrical Engineering, and Teacher Education/Preparation/Certification.

This project was established to provide better access to higher education to place- and time-bound students in partnership with community colleges, Oregon University System (OUS) institutions, communities, and business and industry. Additionally, in order to meet the higher educational needs of the citizens of Oregon through distance education, this project has focused on the development of approximately 99 distance education courses, planned and initiated progressive growth of technology delivery systems infrastructure, course development support including training of professors, distance student support services, needs assessments, marketing, development of community sites for distance learners, and evaluation practices.

This Federal allocation is being used to support eight project categories. This report will address each of these eight categories, the category goals, and how OSU addressed and met, or has not meet, the goals of this project to date. The project directors will then use this information and data to support the continued use of project resources for achieving the existing project goals and/or to make recommendations for changing project goals and objectives.

The OSU Distance Education Project categories, and sections of this report, are:

1. Course Development and Delivery
2. Faculty Training
3. Information Services Infrastructure and Equipment
4. Student Services
5. Needs Assessment
6. Informational Access
7. Regional Access
8. Grant Evaluation and Administration
9. Budget
10. New Directions and Budget Modifications

## **CHANGES IN THE PROJECT'S STRUCTURE AND FUNDING**

The Dean and Director of Distance Education have in mind a new model for distance education at Oregon State University that is currently in its nascent stage. The President is supportive of the new model whose goal is to move Distance Education to the mainstream of the institution. Significant cultural change must accompany the functional changes that have already been started including more clearly defining the relationship between Distance Education and academic departments and colleges of the university. The Director and

Associate Director, with backing from the Dean, are doing this through a matrix of policies that will shape behavior to achieve strategic ends.

OSU has a Statewide Degree Council for distance education that is also the Advisory Council for the project. This group has streamlined the approval process new distance education degree programs must go through in the university. Previously degree programs that were already being offered in on-campus formats had to undergo additional "Category 1" reviews of distance education versions. Category 1 reviews are quite extensive requiring explanation and justification of the degree to a Faculty Senate committee. There have been problems in the past getting degrees approved for the distance education format. The Statewide Degree Council is looking at whether all on-campus degrees should be available at a distance and how to make the review process more efficient. In order to alleviate future problems, the committee is hoping to become a formally recognized Faculty Senate subcommittee.

In the past, distance education funding has gone primarily to early adopters and innovators among the faculty (i.e., those who chose to participate in developing distance education courses). Policies and guidelines are being re-visited as interest in and participation with distance education has spread. The old system that was used to fund new distance education course development effectively built a monetary reward structure for risk takers among the faculty. The practical outcome was that money was used for unique courses that were not necessarily a part of the targeted degree program sequences and were not necessarily high-demand courses. These courses tend to be individualized to the faculty member and tied to personality and not to programmatic goals of this project. The result was that many of these courses were (and are) under-enrolled.

Under the old system, 80% of enrollment and tuition monies were returned to DCE to pay the instructor and 20% went back to the course department. Money returned to the department was disbursed based on an internal agreement between the department and professor. If the course was part of the faculty member's regular load it was part of the normal departmental salary. The money returned to Distance Education was used to pay for administrative expenses including infrastructure and staff. If the course was an overload course, the instructor was paid through Distance and Continuing Education. A problem with the old and new funding models is that some faculty perceive the money going to DCE as money going to the "broker" or middleman that should be coming to them. Faculty members feel it takes a lot of time to develop and deliver a distance-delivered, web-based course and often do not see the value added by Distance Education. A couple of reasons might explain this perception. First, in tight budgetary circumstances, areas such as distance education that have become funding priorities also become the focus of scrutiny. Second, although some faculty members have undoubtedly in the past engaged in real course development, it is unclear that a majority of faculty would have engaged in

deliberate course development using pedagogically sound techniques prior to their involvement with Distance Education.

A new funding model and new guidelines for development of Distance Education courses and programs using monies from the grant are now in place. The new funding model is a resource allocation model based on full-time equivalencies with dollars following productivity. Now, funding decisions will be more deliberate in order to achieve the objectives of Distance Education and the goals of Oregon State University. The new model also is being designed so that over the next two years a sustainable income stream will be created for a continuous process of initial design and refinement of distance education courses and programs. The proposed new budget model requires 10% of tuition money to come back into Distance Education targeted toward course development and improvement. This money will be used to scale up the activity of the Course Production Team to create a continuous self-sustaining funding stream.