

**OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY
DISTANCE AND**

CONTINUING EDUCATION

**A CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED GRANT
WITH FIPSE OVERSIGHT**

YEAR TWO REPORT - JUNE 2000 THRU JUNE 2001

Executive Summary

During its first two years, the Oregon Distance Education Project of Oregon State University has created a working infrastructure to develop high quality distance education courses and degrees. This new OSU distance education system is dedicated to providing learning opportunities to Oregon citizens and other distance learners who are unable to participate in traditional campus-based degree programs because they are place- and time-bound.

To date, the Distance Education Project of OSU has designed and developed four (4) distance delivered undergraduate degree programs and four (4) distance delivered graduate degree programs. To facilitate these degree opportunities, OSU Distance Education (DE) set a goal of creating ninety-nine (99) new distance education courses within three years. Twenty-four new courses were developed during the first year of the project (July 1, 1999 - June 30, 2000) and 53 new courses were created during the second year of the project (July 1, 2000 – June 30, 2001) bringing the two-year total to 77 courses. New DE courses continue to expand both the undergraduate and graduate degree program offerings. During this reporting period, new DE courses accounted for 429 student enrollments in the eight (8) OSU distance degree programs. Additionally, over 25 new DE courses are currently in development for 2001-2002, bringing the total number of DE courses developed within three years to over 100.

During the last project year, Distance and Continuing Education (DCE) worked cooperatively with the OSU Information Services unit to begin the migration of components of all distance education courses into a web environment. The available, and centrally supported, web instructional system at OSU is Blackboard. As a result of this project, OSU implemented a new enterprise wide e-Learning Portal System (Extended Campus) on September 6, 2001. This portal system is fully integrated with the OSU database information system (i.e., Banner), and provides high level e-Learning capabilities, online student services, and online administration services to DE students in an equivalent capacity to campus based students. An institutional-wide decision was made to implement the Blackboard 5.5 Level 3 Enterprise-wide Portal and e-Learning products and integrate them with OSU Banner. The portal system now allows DCE to totally integrate web-delivered e-Learning and online administrative support systems such as admissions, records, registration, and student information databases. Beginning fall 2001, OSU will be hosting approximately 27,080 users in the

Instructional Portal with an average yearly growth rate in users exceeding 50%. The residential student growth rate of Portal use is estimated at 5% per year and distance education student growth rate of Portal use is estimated at 40% per year.

The project is dedicated to creating a comprehensive long-term strategy for efficient course development, faculty training, and assessment. The OSU Distance Education Course Production Team has been working toward the development of these processes and tools. Two websites for DE Course Development and Guidelines, and faculty training for online teaching have resulted from the project. The DE Course Development and Guidelines website contains comprehensive documents providing colleges, departments, instructors, and staff with up-to-date information, links, requirements, and addresses other issues regarding development and delivery of programs and courses sponsored by Oregon State University's Distance and Continuing Education. This course development site is located at: <http://osu.orst.edu/instruct/dce/dce203/>. The faculty training for online teaching website contains information about the uses of Blackboard's course management tools, faculty security in an online environment, implementing information technology into the curriculum, intellectual property in online education, and student retention in distance education. The faculty training website is located at: <http://osu.orst.edu/meta>.

The project has also focused on the development of policies for student services, and the implementation of these policies for students who are engaged in their studies off-campus. This project has identified a core group of student services, including Admission & Orientation, Financial Aid, Registration, and Library and Bookstore access that needed to be addressed and developed to insure that these services are easily accessible and "user friendly" to OSU distance education students. During the past year several online student services have been implemented to address the needs of OSU distance education degree seeking students. These are: the creation of a query system in the OSU central database system (i.e., Banner/Datawarehouse) to identify distance students applying for financial aid, E-News and Career Services for distance students, the Electronic DCE Advising Center (e-Advising_Center), the creation of a new position and hiring of the new distance education librarian, and cooperation with OSU Bookstore to streamline the ordering and shipping of textbooks and videos for distance students.

OSU/DCE has also undertaken a significant needs assessment process to enable DCE to make strategic decisions about which distance education programs to deliver and to identify other educational needs and program opportunities. At the same time DCE marketing efforts were dedicated to promoting awareness of OSU Distance and Continuing Education and its degree offerings to Oregonians and other national and international audiences. DCE has made great progress in the area of needs assessment and informational access and continues to work toward achieving the goals of this project. In the past year DCE has successfully completed a variety of market research projects. The information gained has helped in formulating DCE's strategic plan. A result of these marketing efforts is the identification of areas where DCE needs to create

strategic partnerships with OSU departments. The needs assessment has also helped in evaluating the successes and limitations of the current degree programs and in identifying new degree program opportunities for OSU.

The Oregon Distance Education Project evaluation is proceeding as planned. Project objectives include: the development of 99 DE courses, the creation of a comprehensive course development strategy, and addressing the faculty and administrative issues that arise from the new course development strategy and the integration of academic and distance education units that such strategy entails. Project evaluation, therefore, has focused on organizational and cultural change aspects of the grant and advantages and disadvantages of the new course development procedures. As part of the grant, a new common course evaluation instrument (called in the grant a "common assessment instrument") is being developed. While student-learning outcomes are being assessed in each of the courses developed, only a few of these are assessing differences between online and face-to-face or multi-modal instruction. Findings from these studies will be incorporated into the third year final report.

The OSU Distance Education Project added two new initiatives during the last project year. The first was to identify which OSU departments are considering, or beginning to develop, graduate certificate programs, and then to explore the feasibility of offering these certificates via distance education. DCE has determined there is a need for Graduate Certificates to be developed in the areas of Nutrition and Food Management, Education (Adult and Teacher Education), and Engineering Management. Over the next year of the project, DCE will be working with the above departments to determine the feasibility of developing the required certificates and certificate courses. The second was to identify which OSU departments are considering, or are beginning to develop, professional development non-credit certificate programs. Goals have now been set to work with departments and local companies to develop at least two non-credit certificate programs throughout the state and at least one program to be delivered online during 2001-2002.

In conclusion, the first two years of the Oregon Distance Education Project have resulted in a significant number of successes. It is projected that the project will meet its course development and distance education degree goals (i.e., 99 DE courses, four undergraduate degrees, and four graduate degrees). The Oregon project directly impacted the decision of OSU central administration to implement an enterprise-wide e-Learning Portal System (Extended Campus). This e-Learning system will provide high-level online teaching and learning capabilities, online student services, and online administration services to DE students anytime, anywhere. The Oregon project facilitated the creation of a comprehensive strategy and of processes for efficient course development, faculty training, and assessment. The Oregon project has resulted in OSU's development of policies for online student services dedicated to meeting the needs of non-resident students. The Oregon project identified and created a system to deliver a core group of student services, including Admission & Orientation, Financial Aid, Registration, and Library and Bookstore access to OSU distance education students. And finally, the Oregon project created two

new initiatives that are dedicated to serving distance learners at the professional development levels: graduate certificate programs and non-credit certificate programs.

Detail Report

The Oregon Distance Education Project focuses on nine project categories. This report will address each of these nine categories, the category's goals, and how OSU addressed and met, or has not meet, the goals of the project during this reporting period.