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#### EDITORIAL

Many people have called The American Center for the Study of Distance Education to request general information about setting up a distance education program or unit within their institutions. A commonly asked question is, "How have other institutions dealt with the task of creating a framework for the integration of distance education into their overall program?" In response to this question, DEOSNEWS is publishing The Pennsylvania State University's Report of the Task Force on Distance Education to provide our readers with an example of how one major research university is attempting to deal with this issue. Part 1 of the Report was published in Vol. 3 No. 7. This issue includes Part 2: a complete discussion of Recommendations for Action, references, and a list of task force members.

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#### THE REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON DISTANCE EDUCATION

#### PART 2: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

The Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, PA

November 1992

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#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

In the following pages, the Task Force will make broad and specific recommendations to advance the use and development of distance education across the University. These recommendations are focused on overcoming what we see as the two primary obstacles to the success of a strategic initiative for distance education. The first is essentially expanded systems of management and infrastructure to support increased distance education activities within the University. The second is a more important and far more difficult obstacle to overcome. We sense in the University a broad reluctance to change, a deep suspicion of technology, and a not-too-subtle opposition to new movements like distance education that depart from the traditional means and methods of instruction. We feel that in order for distance education to prosper and thrive, there will need to be a fundamental change in the culture of the University and an alteration in its basic attitudes towards the nature of learning and how it is best accomplished. Yet, despite these difficulties, we believe that they must take place. As outlined in the previous section of this report, the Task Force believes that there are compelling reasons both within and without the University to embark on an aggressive and comprehensive initiative towards the advancement of distance education at Penn State. The members of the Task Force On Distance Education agree that it is now time for the University to undertake such an initiative and advance the development and use of distance education as a central priority in its future planning. The following recommendations reflect the decisions of the Task Force relative to achieving success in such an undertaking. They are organized around six master recommendations that we believe are central to the success of a strategic initiative for distance education.

Recommendation I: That all necessary steps be taken to elevate Penn State to a position of recognized national leadership in the field of distance education.

Distance education is a tool of enormous benefit and value for Penn State and all of higher education. However, its potential has only begun to be explored and its use and program capabilities are still in an early stage of development. Fiscal restraints, institutional conservatism, and the lack of strong national leadership continue to retard its growth despite its proven capacity for improved learning and its extraordinary promise to provide increased efficiency and effectiveness to the system of education.

Penn State is in a unique and advantageous position to bring distance education to the forefront of its plans for the future, gain needed leverage in the precarious business of balancing resources to needs, and increase learning benefits for students. Perhaps of greater importance is the opportunity that exists for the University to assume the leadership role in distance education and show the way for all of higher education. At present, there are pockets of activity in the method spread throughout the country but no single driving force to set the agenda, forge policy, and give direction to the great challenge of creating the models that the future will be built upon.

The Task Force believes that leadership in distance education is also more than an opportunity for Penn State--it is a responsibility that grows from our long history as an innovator and leader in higher education. As one of the nation's great centers of learning, we must make the necessary commitment to excellence and move rapidly and forcefully to shape the course of the future. If the University is to continue to hold national and international preeminence in higher education, it must be a leader and build its greatness upon its willing commitment to lead education into the future.

\*We recommend that the University make leadership in Distance Education a primary goal of its strategic plans for the future.

The central impediment to the growth of distance education in the United States is that it has developed outside of the mainstream of higher education's strategic approaches to learning and has no central advocate on the national level to bring it out of the fringes of activity and into that mainstream. In much of the rest of the world, distance education has been an accepted and exploited means of educating and, as a result, is more advanced and strategically more important in the global conception of educational practice and delivery. Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and much of the Third World have many years of proven accomplishment and success in utilizing distance education. However, in the United States, despite our acknowledged technological superiority and substantial experience and expertise in the method, distance education is, by-and-large, an ancillary activity to resident instruction driven primarily by the efforts of individual faculty or units that have developed programs as a matter of personal interest or initiative. Even at Penn State where distance education has a long and successful history, the method remains relatively under-utilized given the University's resources, experience, and highly developed infrastructure.

The Task Force believes that the full value and importance of distance education will never be realized in the United States until it is brought forcefully into the mainstream of recognized academic activity by a powerful advocate. The Task Force believes that Penn State is in a unique position to become that advocate and champion distance education for both its own interests and those of the broader academic community. To do this, the University must take that necessary first-step of making leadership in distance education a priority in its

strategic plans for the future.

\*We recommend that the American Center for the Study of Distance Education at Penn State be enhanced and expanded to become the national locus for the study and understanding of Distance Education; for the shaping of national policy for the method; for the development of new program designs and technological applications; and as a principal force for the promotion, development, and use of distance education throughout higher education.

Distance education is currently undergoing dynamic changes as its potential uses are expanding and its basic nature is being transformed by technology. There is a pressing need for research, policy, information, and, above all understanding of the method and its place in American higher education. At present, most distance education activities are scattered, isolated, and remote from one another and need some central point where information and accomplishment can be shared and evaluated. Questions of policy concerning such important issues as "fair-use" and copyright, market infringement, and accreditation are being raised with increased frequency but have not yet found a recognized forum for their discussion and consideration. The need for new models of programs, assessment, management, and marketing specifically developed for distance education is already great but no one has, as yet, come forward to design and create them. In short, the escalating growth of distance education and its potential for greater use in higher education is demanding a national agent or agents to address the many issues, concerns, and requirements that surround the method and increase as it becomes more visible and known.

The Task Force believes that the American Center For The Study Of Distance Education at Penn State is in an advantageous position to spearhead a national response to the many concerns and issues surrounding distance education that must be addressed and Penn State is perfectly positioned to serve as the host institution for the shaping of the future of distance education. The American Center For The Study Of Distance Education is a national and international resource located within the College of Education. The Center publishes The American Journal of Distance Education, which is widely recognized as the principal source of scholarly information and response to distance education in the United States. In addition, the Center publishes a monograph series and participates in the Distance Education On-line Symposium (DEOS), an electronic bulletin board network with over 1000 members in over fifty countries. The Center is the point of contact between American institutions and individuals involved in distance education and the world-wide audience through the International Council For Distance Education. By enhancing and expanding the activities of the Center, Penn State could provide the leadership and support the vision that distance education will need to grow and prosper as a national force in higher education. This task force believes that such leadership is necessary and that Penn State is, by virtue of its history and existing strength, a most logical choice to assume this important responsibility.

\*We recommend that partnerships with business, industry, and government be forged to support Penn State's efforts

in advancing the cause of distance education and bring the University to a position of national and international preeminence.

Distance education will not grow by the acts of any single agent or interest. It will, instead, require cooperation, sharing, and the interaction of a vast number of partners from both the public and the private sector. Business and industry will be important partners in any program of distance education. The technologies to create and deliver distance education will be developed in the private sector as will much of the necessary expertise and experience to produce programs of the highest quality. Government, as a financial partner, determiner of national and state policy, and overseer of the majority of our colleges and universities, will need to be heavily involved in any broad program of development and use. And, government will likely be one of the primary clients for many of the programs that will be developed through distance education.

This task force believes that the relative success or failure of distance education will depend upon the partnerships that are forged between government, business, industry, and our educational institutions to bring this method forward rapidly and aggressively. We believe that in the interests of quality and excellence in education, the leadership role in this collective must come from higher education. The potential for profit in distance education is great and may easily create a market-driven model that fails to make quality of instruction and increased learning benefits for students the highest priority in the development of the method if higher education does not seize the leadership role.

Again, Penn State is uniquely qualified to forge the requisite partnerships for distance education and provide the necessary leadership, not only for the Commonwealth, but for the broad national interests of quality education and service. This task force believes that time is of the essence and that these partnerships must be developed now. To wait or hesitate is to invite others to assume the leadership role and open the very real possibility that distance education will not proceed at the direction of our educational institutions but, rather, be guided by the private sector, the market, and the desire for profit.

**Recommendation II:** That the University create an administrative and organizational structure that encourages and facilitates the use and development of distance education in all areas of academic pursuit and endeavor.

Distance education, unlike many other means of educating, requires the participation of several and sometimes many partners to create and deliver instruction to students. For most faculty interested in creating distance education courses or developing distance education versions of existing courses, the mechanical process of taking an idea and moving it forward to program status is, presently, time-consuming, confusing, cumbersome, and frustrating. Few faculty or administrators know where to begin and the process itself may require developing contacts with as many as six or seven separate support units with no central tie or connection. Obviously, many, if not most, potential projects are abandoned early in the

process because of the difficulties that one faces in even attempting to initiate a proposal.

In order to truly build a movement toward distance education, our development process must be streamlined, our support services reorganized, and our schools and colleges brought into the process as active participants. Faculty need to know where to take program proposals and be encouraged to initiate them. Once proposals are made, they also need to know that an agent or agents will carry them forward and give them fair hearing within a context that provides reasonable opportunity for development. Proposals that are advanced need to have an advocate who can assemble the necessary contact for faculty, explore the feasibility of their proposals, and bring together the necessary expertise and support to actually develop them. And, of course, there must be incentives and rewards built into this process to encourage and promote faculty participation.

Of equal importance to the structures that are needed to facilitate development from proposal to program is the need to promote, encourage, facilitate, and guide program initiation and the early development of proposals within our schools and colleges. At present, there is very little help or encouragement for distance education projects on the local level. If a system-wide utilization of distance education is to become a reality, it must begin with individual faculty who are inspired by the support and assistance of their departments and colleges. "Commitment" is a crucial word in the furtherance of distance education goals and commitment must begin at the local level. However, if such a commitment to distance education is to become a reality, it must be fueled by support and direction from the central administration.

\*We recommend that all schools, colleges, and academic units within the University be charged by the central administration to explore, encourage, and support the development and use of distance education and include distance education within their strategic plans in the future.

The members of the Task Force agree that if distance education is to have a qualitative and quantitative impact upon the University's future, it must become a broad-based method that is applied across the breadth of our educational, research, and service activities. This will require direction from the central administration who must serve as the principal advocate for distance education through the strategic planning process. If the central administration does not provide clear and forceful leadership in this regard, the Task Force fears that distance education will continue to be a marginalized activity isolated from the mainstream of academic endeavor. Consequently, a necessary prerequisite for the advancement of distance education at Penn State is a commitment to it as a recognized and desired component in the strategic planning process.

Since distance education must build from within our constituent schools and colleges, there is a need for administrative support, encouragement, and guidance on the local level to serve the development and use of distance education programs. Rather than the creation of a new

administrative layer, we see this being accomplished through an expansion of the duties of those administrators already charged with graduate and undergraduate teaching, research, and service. This charge should call for the recognition of distance education as an important factor in the administrative actions of our schools and colleges and should specifically include the use and development of distance education as an administrative priority.

\*We recommend that a unit be created under the direction of the Vice President for Continuing Education specifically charged and organized to serve the development and delivery of distance education.

If distance education is to grow and thrive at Penn State, there is a clear need to create an administrative locus for such activities that is able to coordinate development and marshal the many diverse services needed to support and advance the method. By virtue of his current charge and responsibility over many of the units in the current infrastructure that already support distance education activities, the Vice President for Continuing Education is the logical person to assume responsibility for the creation of such a unit. However, the Task Force does not recommend the creation of a new bureaucratic layer within Continuing Education but, rather, a reconfiguration and reorganization of existing units both within and without Continuing Education to serve as a unit specifically devoted to distance education.

In terms of this proposed unit itself, we believe that it must draw from a wide variety of resources including marketing, program development, program production, expertise in all pertinent media and delivery systems, management, and assessment to provide a comprehensive service for distance education. Our sense is that such a unit would become the focal point for distance education activities and bring status, visibility, and credibility in the field of distance education to Penn State. This unit should be charged with bringing the University to a position of national and international preeminence in the creation and delivery of educational programs to a diverse audience through the innovative use of various technologies. It should be responsible for reviewing distance education proposals generated by the various schools and colleges, studying their feasibility in the broad context of the University's mission, coordinating the various support and management services needed to develop and distribute programs, and funding or coordinating the funding of distance education programs. This unit would also form and lead a university-wide "Distance Education Coordinating Council," consisting of all units involved in the production, service, or delivery of distance education programs at Penn State, including those that fall outside of the administrative jurisdiction of the unit.

It is recommended that all Distance Education programs and courses will follow the University's standard curricular and program approval processes. As always, ensuring content quality and evaluating pedagogical objectives rests within the purview of the home academic/sponsoring unit.

Recommendation III: That the University commit all resources necessary to fully develop and maintain an evolving technological infrastructure to allow distance education to become a viable, efficient, and effective component in Penn State's future.

The Task Force finds that a necessary prerequisite for success in distance education is the existence of the technological infrastructure to support and deliver programs beyond the traditional boundaries of the University. This includes not only traversing the multi-campus structure of the University, but also expanding to other client locations -- locations such as corporate meeting rooms, community learning centers, and, indeed, personal residences themselves. Without a functioning network that creates a truly interactive and interdependent university "geographically dispersed" but technologically united, all other aspects of distance education will be prohibited from producing the positive and beneficial outcomes that we envision.

The technological infrastructure that will be necessary to do this includes items such as adequate production facilities from which to originate programs, the technology needed to support and adapt instruction to the distance education environment, the information resources to support these programs, and the appropriate telecommunications infrastructure. These elements are necessary to deliver programming and information to clients no matter where they may be.

We recognize that the area of information technology is terribly complex and includes a vast array of interwoven yet frequently competing technological interests. To attempt to selectively choose from the myriad of alternatives available without regard to the total picture is, at best, simplistic and could prove to be counterproductive. However, it is clear to the Task Force that a central strategy must be developed, a cost-projection generated, and a plan for implementation put into effect. This task force recommends that those units and agencies within the University with the knowledge and expertise to forge such an infrastructure be brought together for the expressed purpose of developing a strategic plan that will create the structure needed to serve an enhanced and expanded use of distance education. This is a matter of crucial importance and should be done immediately.

Any consideration of the infrastructure must take into account the realities of constant change and technological breakthroughs. The rate of technological advancement is so rapid that unless the funding strategy developed is of an evolving and flexible nature, the investments that we make will soon be outdated and overcome by new and developing technologies. To that end, we recommend that the University adopt a strategy of providing adequate life-cycle funding for the infrastructure to assure that service levels in the future will be commensurate with ongoing technological developments and with increased audience demand.

\*We recommend that a special task force or committee be appointed by the central administration from those agencies

or units within the University who possess knowledge or expertise over any aspect of the technological or practical infrastructure needed to serve an enhanced or expanded use of distance education and charged to deliver a strategic plan for the development of that infrastructure at the earliest possible date.

\*We recommend that the University take whatever steps are necessary to implement the strategic plan for that infrastructure.

\*We recommend that the University adopt as part of that implementation a strategy of providing adequate life-cycle funding for the technological infrastructure to assure that service levels are maintained and responsive to ongoing technological developments.

Recommendation IV: That a system of investment in the future of distance education be established to provide support for program development and the continued growth of the method through its successful application.

The ability to calculate or project funding needs for distance education programs is an extremely difficult thing to do because of the almost limitless variety of applications that can be generated and the equally vast range of costs that can be associated with the method. Some programs, like those that rely on printed texts and postal mail, can be relatively inexpensive while others, particularly those that utilize full-motion video, interactive multi-media, or broadcast delivery, can be extremely expensive. However, programs that require high initial investment may prove to be extremely cost-effective over the long run while others that require only slight support may actually be more costly when viewed from a per student perspective. Since there is such variance in cost from program-to-program and so little relationship between cost and program quality and effectiveness, it is almost impossible to determine what support will be needed for distance education over any given period of time.

However, it is always important to remember that distance education exists as a rather flexible activity. Programs can be made available in whatever quantities are needed to meet demands and can be offered in a variety of formats to serve differing learner circumstances. Distance education programs also become increasingly cost-efficient as demand increases which is seldom the case with resident instruction. Programs can also migrate to other markets and expand their market potential. In short, distance education is an activity with far greater ability to capitalize on opportunities and return more on its investment than many traditional programs that are tied to the twin realities of space and the limited student/teacher ratios predicated by face-to-face instruction.

The Task Force believes that distance education should develop in a more entrepreneurial environment than traditional methods of instruction. We believe that programs should be developed with a view towards generating revenues of creating cost-saving benefits whenever possible in order to self-fund a proportion of the costs of future development. Such a system,

based on investment rather than direct funding, would allow the method to build upon its successes while providing for a level of necessary risk taking in the overall scheme of program development. Such a system would also produce a more realistic approach to the market, greater cost-efficiency in operations, more aggressive marketing, and more thoughtful and considered investment strategies. We believe that a spirit of venture capitalism will not only best support distance quality and greater benefit to both students and the University. We also believe that a broad application of the principle of investment will encourage program development and serve to advance the case for distance education.

\*We recommend that a substantial pool of resources be assigned to the proposed Distance Education Unit to fund program development and that a portion of revenues generated by distance education programs or cost-saving benefits derived from their use be returned to the pool to support further and enhanced program development.

In order for distance education to grow and prosper, there is a need for the method to develop across the full range of its potential applications and, simultaneously, keep pace with the expanding opportunities that are being provided by emerging technologies. This will require a carefully controlled development process that capitalizes on strengths while allowing for a significant amount of investment in creative and innovative programs that carry a measure of risk in their development. Fundamental to such a process is the existence of a substantial base of funding to support both the production and delivery of programs and the necessary resources to create new programs that will advance the method to the "cutting-edge" of technological use and application.

Rather than take a "scatter-shot" approach spread throughout the 23 centers and campuses of the University, the Task Force believes that a more reasonable approach would be to centralize funding in the proposed distance education unit to allow for a controlled and strategically focused development of distance education. Our sense is that such an approach to funding would produce the most effective use of resources, the maintenance of system-wide standards of quality and excellence in programming, and still allow for investment in the new which will be needed to build the future of distance education.

But rather than seeing this as a typical funding arrangement that operates solely from an annual budget, we envision a more entrepreneurial system that allows for a significant proportion of revenues generated from the success of the method to be returned to the unit to increase its funding ability and promote further development. It is our belief that such a system will foster quality and growth through success and reward. We also believe that cost-saving benefits gained through the use of distance education should also bring enhancements to the unit. Put simply, the Task Force believes that a funding mechanism based in a system of venture capitalism will provide distance education with an administration that is aggressive, focused, considerate of the need for cost-efficiency, yet forward looking and disposed to

building a future for distance education through the accomplishments of the present.

\*We recommend that a portion of the revenues generated by specific distance education programs or the cost-saving benefits derived from their use be returned to the schools, colleges, departments, or any other academic units that participated in the support or development of those programs.

Although the proposed Distance Education Unit and its proposed pool of resources may provide the means for distance education to grow at Penn State, a true initiative for change must begin in the schools, colleges, departments and faculty who will create the programs for the future. In order for such a movement towards distance education to become a reality, there must be not only direction from the central administration but a sense of shared ownership in the method and a commitment to its success built within all of our academic units and embraced by the entire university community.

The Task Force believes that this will require an investment in distance education that comes from every corner of the University rather than from an isolated financial investment that resides only in the proposed Distance Education Unit. Investments in other equally important resources like time, administrative and faculty effort, strategic focus, and local commitments to program development will be necessary to build a true initiative of University-wide proportions. We believe that a call for such investments must show a clear potential for benefits to be gained and rewards granted to those who make the commitment to distance education. A plan that involves profit sharing in revenues and material returns from the cost-saving benefits derived from the success of the method would, in the view of the Task Force, help to provide the necessary incentive to academic units to encourage their involvement in distance education. Such a system would also bring a competitive dimension to the process which would help to foster creativity and innovation, promote quality, and make distance education a matter of strategic importance rather than a peripheral activity. This arrangement would allow distance education to be seen as an opportunity to bring new resources to academic units through their participation and creation of successful programs instigated and developed as part of their own strategic planning process in service to their own goals and missions.

\*We recommend that a portion of the revenues generated by specific distance education programs be returned to the faculty who participated in the creation, teaching, development, or design of those programs in proportion to the extent of their contribution or participation.

At the root of any successful program in distance education are the faculty who conceive, design, present, and shape the content of those programs. Quality distance education programs are the result of teachers who redirect some of their efforts away from the traditional classroom and embrace new methods and conceptions of educating while holding onto the highest standards of excellence in teaching. Quality and excellence in distance education, as

in any form of education, are achieved not through technologies or management systems or electronic networks but by the thought, effort, and planning of those teachers who work to create the best instructional programs possible.

In order for Penn State to gain national and international preeminence in distance education, it must attract the finest and most dedicated teachers to the method and allow them to build and create programs of the highest order. To do this, there must be support for their efforts, encouragement from their academic units, and tangible professional benefits for their participation. The most important investment made in distance education will be in the faculty who will shape the programs of the present and the future. The system of investment must be designed to allow quality teachers to become shareholders in method and the primary recipients of the rewards and benefits that will come with its success. Development funds must be made available to faculty to encourage their participation and profit-sharing should be a provision for all faculty working with the method.

Recommendation V: That the University establish a clear system of incentives and rewards to encourage activity, recognize achievement, and foster continuing accomplishment in distance education at Penn State.

A movement towards an enhanced and increased utilization of distance education will require a fundamental change in the culture of Penn State. Colleges, departments, and individual faculty will not embrace distance education unless it is seen as being firmly within the mainstream of their mission and acknowledged in parity with other mainstream activities. A clear charge from the central administration to include distance education within the central strategies of the University will begin the process of change but it will take more tangible benefits to move this process forward. Changing a culture will require rewards and incentives that enable people to change without penalty and provide them with realistic potential for professional advancement.

Colleges, departments, and faculty need encouragement to participate in distance education and, in times of severe financial and material constraint, those encouragements must be clear, compelling, and dramatic. Modest measures and the promise of only marginal benefits will not overcome the institutional inertia that sets in during hard times when people are far more concerned with protecting what they have than extending their interests to new and unfamiliar activities. If a movement towards distance education is to begin, as the Task Force believes it must, the benefits to departments, schools, and colleges must be made abundantly clear, unambiguous, and cogent as forceful examples of the University's new priorities.

\*We recommend that the Promotion and Tenure "Rainbow Dividers" be rewritten to specifically recognize distance education activities as being appropriate and co-equal to other activities in the categories of Teaching Ability And Effectiveness, Research And Creative Accomplishments, and Scholarship And Mastery Of Subject Matter.

In order for faculty to freely participate in distance education activities, those activities must be recognized by administrators and peers as being significant and appropriate within the broad context of professional development and accomplishment. Without specific notation or reference in the published guides for dossier preparation and review, the "Rainbow Dividers," such activities will appear to lie outside of the mainstream and, consequently, be regarded as peripheral or of lesser importance than those that do appear.

The Task Force believes that it will be important both practically and symbolically for distance education activities to be specifically referenced in the "Rainbow Dividers" to clearly establish their appropriate place in the process of review, their worth and merit as valuable pursuits for faculty, and remove any question as to whether or where they should be recognized in the review process. Excellence in the teaching of distance education courses should be specifically noted under Teaching Ability And Effectiveness to establish parity with resident instruction. The creation of distance education video, audio, computer software, and multi-media programs should be included along with other recognized creative activities like painting, sculpture, films, novels, or poems. Research accomplishments in distance education including product development should be duly noted and scholarly achievements such as course or program development should be noted under Scholarship And Mastery Of Subject Matter.

The Task Force believes that it is in the best interests of distance education, individual faculty, and the University to request that the Faculty Senate consider an expansion of the language of the "Rainbow Dividers" to include specific reference to distance education in all appropriate areas of review.

\*We recommend that distance education activities be mainstreamed into the faculty's list of responsibilities so that a faculty member teaching, conducting research, or creatively involved in distance education sees it as part of his or her work and not as an extra or adjunct responsibility.

Work in distance education has been treated by most departments and colleges as something done in addition to or on top of faculty's regularly assigned duties. This, more than any other single factor, has kept distance education activity to a minimum and, by definition, outside of the mainstream. If distance education is to grow to occupy a position of strategic importance, it must be accorded status equal to other activities normally included in the calculation of workload assignments. The members of the Task Force agree that unless distance education becomes a regular and accepted part of the responsibilities of faculty in their normal workloads, it will continue to be a minor and peripheral force in Penn State's efforts to create a stronger and more responsive university.

\*We recommend that the funding mechanism proposed earlier be used to provide financial incentives for schools, colleges, departments, and faculty to participate in distance education and return benefits whenever distance education programs produce revenues or cost-savings benefits for the

University.

As noted earlier, the Task Force believes that the mechanism for funding distance education programs must make funds available to colleges, departments, and faculty to encourage program development. Academic units and academics must see distance education not only as a valuable method to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of learning but also as a means to increase their own strategic options in planning for the future.

In addition, colleges, departments, and faculty must see the potential for financial awards that will come from successes in distance education. The Task Force believes that a program that rewards success through benefit-sharing in the accomplishments of the method provides the greatest incentives while promoting quality. Although the Task Force believes that the purely educational benefits of distance education are compelling, we also recognize that any broad-based movement towards expanded program use and development will depend on the creation of a system that provides clear financial incentives and holds the potential to produce substantial rewards.

\*We recommend that the University create annual awards to recognize achievement in distance education and provide support for continued accomplishment.

Again, the creation of a new culture in higher education that acknowledges and promotes the worth of distance education will require both practical and symbolic recognition of excellence in the method. Awards for excellence and achievement are traditional means of recognizing accomplishments in most areas of academic endeavor and should be granted in the area of distance education.

The Task Force sees an award system for distance education directed at the two areas of primary accomplishment - teaching and research/creative activities. It will be important to specifically recognize teaching in distance education to not only acknowledge the very different skills and techniques required in the method but, also, to elevate the regard for the method to a level of equivalence with traditional instruction. In like ways, the acknowledgment of accomplishment in research and/or creative activities gives a needed sense of value and importance for such efforts.

As with all systems of reward, there is an obvious incentive value in creating awards and the equally important provision of additional support to promote future accomplishment by building upon present achievement. The Task Force sees clear benefit in a system of reward that gives visibility and symbolic support for distance education while allowing accomplishments to sustain and, hopefully, increase the development of expertise in the method.

Recommendation VI: That all necessary steps be taken to create an environment favorable to distance education that will promote its use and development while serving to change the culture of higher education at Penn State.

As noted earlier in this report, one of the greatest obstacles to distance education's growth and success is the current culture in higher education that is generally resistant to change, deeply imbedded in the tradition of resident instruction, and, frequently, oppositional to ideas that appear to be new or revolutionary. The members of the Task Force brought many preconceptions and opinions to the process of preparing this report that have been altered and changed by our investigation. We no longer believe that face-to-face instruction is inherently better or more effective than distance education. We have come to understand that distance education encompasses a wide-variety of means and methods and cannot be thought of as being synonymous with telecommunications or electronic media or any other single medium. Even our conception of "distance" has been modified. Distance education does not have to focus on learners at great distances and may prove to be most beneficial in reaching students who are relatively near-by through local learning centers and, even, individual dormitories. But we also recognize that the process that produced change in our perceptions is too demanding and lengthy to apply to the University at large.

It is our contention that strong support from the central administration must be a prerequisite for any attempt at change but that changes at the most important level, within colleges and departments, will not occur solely because of direction from the administration. We believe that examples of successful distance education programs created within our own educational units will be the most persuasive means of advancing the method and changing our cultural views of successful instruction. Our sense is that locally developed examples of what distance education can do and the benefits that it can provide will be a more compelling and practical means of affecting change than any other avenue that is open to us.

This does not mean that other means should not be employed. The International Distance Education Conference planned for the Fall of 1993 and other University-wide events focus on distance education provide valuable exposure and important information about the method. In addition to formal events, a program of information and education for the full University community will be needed to dispel the many misconceptions and false impressions that are associated with the method and present its case with clarity and accuracy. There is also the very real need to bring distance education out of the background of University activities and make it visible and prominent in University thinking.

Yet, it is the firm belief of the Task Force that involvement in the practical development of distance education must begin now and take place across the full spectrum of academic activity if there is to be a strategically viable movement towards its use.

\*We recommend that the initial thrust of the proposed Distance Education Unit be to identify and develop demonstration projects in each of the major academic units to clearly establish the potential use, benefit, and application of distance education within these units in service to their broad academic goals.

For most of our faculty and many of our colleges and schools, distance education is unknown, misunderstood, or viewed as being inappropriate to serve their interests. In order to change these attitudes, it will be necessary to create specific projects that demonstrate the worth and merit of the method in the particular context of each of these major academic units. These demonstration projects can be the first stages of programs intended for full development or specifically designed as promotional presentations to explore the possible uses of the method in service to the distinct needs of a particular unit. The Task Force believes that such programs should be encouraged, supported, and produced for presentation as rapidly as possible.

\*We recommend that the University and the American Center For The Study Of Distance Education sponsor and promote conferences, workshops, speakers programs, and other events to inform and educate the university community about distance education.

The Task Force believes that an aggressive campaign to promote distance education, inform the university community of its nature and use, and bring examples of its successful application to the attention of both faculty and administrators must be undertaken as a precondition to any serious initiative towards an expanded use of distance education.

\*We recommend that the proposed Distance Education Unit develop individualized programs with each major academic unit to inform and educate their faculty about distance education and bring them to a better understanding of the worth, merit, and potential benefits of the method for their particular area.

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