

APPENDIX 9B

INSTITUTE for DISTANCE and DISTRIBUTED LEARNING WORK PLAN

January 1, 1999 – June 30, 2000

Status Report

September 10, 1999

GOAL 1: Increased Assessment of Educational Practices

Objectives:

- 1.1** Hire a Planning and Assessment Coordinator to focus on distance and distributed learning and technology supported educational practices. *(University strategy 3.4c)*

Status: Interviews of candidates in progress.

- 1.2** Benchmark the university's distance and distributed learning programs against those of peer institution. *(University strategy 3.4c)*

Status: Virginia Tech distance and distributed learning course and program offerings benchmarked against SCHEV peer institutions, results distributed to colleges; benchmarking of course/program pricing in progress.

- 1.2** Establish and implement assessment procedures based on the *Flashlight Project* model for use in distance and distributed learning courses. *(University strategy 3.4c)*

Status: Development of procedures underway. Contract with David Taylor to develop initial model.

- 1.3** Develop and implement a standard set of assessment instruments for the assessment of distance and distributed learning courses. *(University strategy 3.4c)*

Status: Standard assessment instruments for IVC and web-based courses developed and implemented Spring semester 1999, results are currently being compiled and will be shared with faculty and colleges. Comprehensive report of Spring and Summer online courses reports in draft form. Final reports by the end of September. Review of assessment instruments and procedures to be conducted by Associate Director for Planning and Assessment when hired..

- 1.4** Implement the proposed continuous improvement model for the Institute for Distance and Distributed Learning. (*University strategy 3.4c*)

Status: To begin Fall semester.

- 1.5** Enhance the assessment procedures for distance learning program and student support services. (*University strategy 3.4c*)

Status: Development of new assessment instruments in process; basic assessment of distance and distributed learning program support services added to course evaluations.

- 1.6** Maintain compliance with state and national accrediting organizations and agencies regarding distance and distributed learning and provide leadership support to the development of new criteria. (*University strategy 3.4c*)

Status: SACS Recommendations 1 (reporting of distance learning sites and programs), 8 (Clear and explicit distance learning goals) and 12 (ready and timely access to adequate library/learning resources) have been addressed and Virginia Tech is in compliance; SACS recommendation 9 (demonstrate effectiveness of distance learning program and achievement of goals) is in process – must complete cycle and close loop.

GOAL 2: Improve Communication and Coordination

Objectives:

- 2.1** Establish the Institute for Distance and Distributed Learning at Virginia Tech in support of the university's strategic mission. (*University strategies 3.3j. & 3.4c*)

Status Completed - Institute established in March, 1999 by Provost.

- 2.2** Establish an advisory process for distance and distributed learning that is inclusive, collaborative and broad-based and which recommends enabling policies and practices regarding distance education at Virginia Tech. (*University strategy 3.4c*)

Status: IDDL Advisory Board with representatives from each college, university libraries, student affairs and information technologies established and meets regularly; recommends IDDL policies to IDDL Policy Board.

- 2.3** Collaboratively work with other stakeholders to eliminate university barriers to teaching in a distance and distributed learning environment. (*University strategies 3.1d, 3.4c*)

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Status: Task force on distance learning scheduling resulted in improved processes; task force on distance learning course index numbers report completed – recommendations under review; five policy changes prepared and reviewed by IDDL Advisory Council and presented to IDDL Policy Board. Dedicated index number for DDL courses approved by IDDL Policy Board.

- 2.4** Establish guidelines and procedures for developing and delivering distance and distributed learning courses. (*University strategies 3.1, 3.4c*).

Status: Task force on distance learning scheduling established; IVC guidelines and procedures for scheduling IVC courses implemented Fall '99; guidelines and procedures on course development, delivery, key contacts and “best practices” in development and will be on IDDL homepage.

- 2.5** Assist in the development of faculty policies regarding faculty workload and rewards and incentives in teaching in a distance and distributed learning environment. (*University strategy 3.1, 3.4b, 3.4c*).

Status: Policies on faculty workload, rewards and incentives of other institutions are being reviewed. Report to be written.

- 2.6** Initiate a university-wide look for VTOnline as the university's electronic homepage for distance and distributed learning course and program offerings (*University strategies 3.4a, 3.4b, 3.4c, and 3.4d*).

Status: In process; next revision scheduled for summer 1999; Current average hits –2,000 per day; during registration periods 6,000- 7000 hits per day.

- 2.7** Develop and implement an Institute for Distance and Distributed Learning homepage that provides faculty, staff and others with information and resources on developing and delivering distance and distributed learning courses. (*University strategies 3.4a, 3.4b, 3.4c, 3.4d*)

Status: Complete. Homepage up with additions continuously added. Revisions underway.

- 2.8** In collaboration with the Office of International Research and Development and other appropriate university entities, establish international links for the collaborative development and delivery of distance and distributed learning courses. (*University strategy 3.3k*)

Status: Meeting scheduled with ORID to assess international opportunities; Preliminary discussions by IDDL with representatives from Australia, Ghana, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Korea, and Columbia.

- 2.9** Collaborate with the Electronic Campus of Virginia, the Southern Regional Board's Electronic Campus and other cooperatives in the development and delivery of distance and distributed learning courses. *(University strategies 3.3j. & 3.4c)*

Status: Continued collaborations with and support of SREC and ECVA.

- 2.10** Increase scholarly research and teaching materials related to web-based instruction and research through the Digital Discourse Center.

Status: Collaborated with the Scholarly Research Project to improve access to online materials through the purchase of a new improved search engine and mirrored server; collaborated with the College of A & S to procure two new servers for the Digital Discourse Center. During Spring 1999, the DDC experienced 20,000 hits and 4,000 - 5,000 page loads per day. Currently discussing hosting the highly regarded Choices & Challenges Civic and Sciences public Outreach Project.

- 2.11** Initiate formal, social and economic research and teaching on the impact of the Internet on Virginia's economy and communities through the Institute for Social Assessment of Information Technology.

Status: Two responses to RFPs (National Urban League - \$200,000, Va. Department of Health \$15,000)

GOAL 3: Increased Training, Support and Infrastructure

Objectives:

- 3.1** Work with appropriate academic and student support services to insure that all students obtaining course work through distance and distributed learning have equivalent access to library and other resources. *(University strategy 3.2d, 3.4e).*

Status: Representatives of library and student support services on IDDL Advisory Board; teleconference on student services for distance learners downlinked; meeting with Student Support Services departments initiated; key support services currently being identified; efforts currently underway to make all existing online courses accessible for the visually impaired and deaf and hard of hearing; accessibility to library resources improved through purchase of new online search engines and server.

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- 3.2** Develop a set of course development and delivery "best practice" models that can be used by faculty, departments and colleges as a basis for decision making in the creation and delivery of distance and distributed learning courses and programs. The models will include different forms of synchronous, asynchronous and hybrid courses. (*University strategy 3.4c*)

Status: Currently in development. Initial set to be completed by September 1999.

- 3.3** Collaborate with Virginia Tech Extension Centers, community colleges, public schools and other educational entities to provide a broad-based system of regional, cost effective and technically supported receive site facilities for distance and distributed course and program offerings. (*university strategy 3.6b*)

Status: Currently meeting with Extension Services personnel to determine costs and plan to connect Extension Centers to VT course delivery network; meeting with Extension Services and Continuing Education to determine educational programming opportunities. Continued collaboration with community colleges – VT is currently on three community college sites. Providing technical assistance to public schools. IDDL Director on CALS Distance Learning Advisory Board.

- 3.4** Effectively utilize the University's on-campus distance learning classrooms to meet the instructional delivery needs of the university. (*University strategy 3.4a & 3.4d*)

Status: Implemented IVC course scheduling procedures in Spring '99 resulting in more effective distance learning classroom scheduling; Improvements currently being studied; Action Team to be established to design multi-functional DL classroom.

- 3.5** Seek high quality, cost effective solutions to the development and delivery of distance and distributed learning courses and programs over Net.Work.Virginia. (*University strategy 3.4a & 3.4d*)

Status: Video streaming as one solution is currently being researched – currently testing seven vendor solutions; delivery of instruction for two classes will be tested summer '99 with video streaming technologies. Initiated rapid course development teams to reduce cycle time of course development initiated: two Business courses developed. RCD Team currently working on ECPE course

- 3.6** Provide sufficient training, instructional design/development and technical support to faculty in the development of courses and programs delivered over Net.Work.Virginia. (*University strategy 3.4a &3.4d*)

Status: Training program for course development revised to include emphasis on hybrid approaches, increased student/faculty and student/student interaction; Just-in-time IVC training program established to compliment FDI program. Two FDI tracks combined to create DDL track with asynchronous and synchronous sub-tracks; Numerous 2 hour training sessions on IVC and web course development and delivery during fall and spring.

- 3.7** Continue to seek ways to increase the scalability of distance learning program delivery over Net.Work.Virginia (*University strategy 3.4c*)

Status: On-going research in course delivery technologies such as video streaming; IP/TV; IVC courses and programs delivered throughout the day maximizing the investment.

- 3.8** Provide faculty with sufficient training, instructional design/development, production and technical support to create and deliver web-based and hybrid courses through the Open Campus. (*University strategies 3.4a, 3.4c.*)

Status: Initiated Rapid Course Development teams to bring nearly completed online courses to completion for summer and fall '99 delivery – 15 courses completed or in process; Supported efforts of 18 faculty. Initiated the Course Development Liasion program within the colleges to assist faculty at the college and department level, to increase IDDL/college communication and to maintain skill currency of college course developers.

- 3.9** Establish easy student access to basic support services of the Open Campus including online registration and payment, library and learning resources and counseling. (*University strategies 3.4c*)

Status: In process through collaborative efforts with library and student services. Assessment of services conducted spring and summer '99.

- 3.10** Assist faculty, departments and colleges in designing lifelong learning educational modules, which meet critical needs of business and industry and are delivered in a time and place-free or hybrid environment. (*University strategies 3.3i.2 & 3.3m*)

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Status: In startup phases of GPIT program. Working with continuing education and others offer DDL professional development opportunities.

- 3.11** Establish the Center for the Development of the 21st Century Classroom and move it to the ACITC to serve as a practicing research environment for the creation of effective distance and distributed learning teaching and learning environments. . (*University strategy 3.1d,3.4b, 3.4d*)

Status: C21 established in McBryde 110 through collaborative efforts of Instructional Services, Department of Computer Science and IDDL; initial startup equipment and support provided by Instructional Services.

- 3.12** In collaboration with the Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, the Center for Innovation in Learning, and the Graduate School, assist faculty in researching and using new technologies to create the classroom of the 21st century. (*University strategy 3.1d, 3.4b, 3.4c, 3.4d*)

Status: Waiting until C21 is fully up and running.

- 3.13** Provide instruction to undergraduate and graduate students in the use of spatial data and geographic information systems in a variety of different departments and colleges through the GIS Teaching Center.

Status: Spatial data track as part of 1999 FDI, preliminary room design developed by geography dept.; GIS teaching center part of preliminary room designs in ACITC.

GOAL 4: Identification of Program Niches

Objectives:

- 4.1** In collaboration with the university community identify Virginia Tech's market for course and program offerings and develop and implement a marketing plan to successfully reach these markets. (*University strategies 3.1,3.2,3.3,3.4,3.5,3.6*)

Status: Image brochure for VT distance and distributed learning in printing. VT distance learning student brochure in initial development; advertised online courses in Washington Post, Washington Post Magazine, Richmond Times, Roanoke Times and Virginia Pilot; Marketing materials targeted for extended campus centers; Distance learning survey reviewed,

potential course and programs areas identified, waiting for approved position allocation of IDDL marketing person for 1999/2000; person will be hired as soon as possible.

- 4.2** Collaborate with the eight colleges and the Graduate School to identify target and deliver courses and programs, in support of the university's seven crosscutting initiatives, and which meet market needs. (*University strategy 3.2g*)

Status: Discussions underway with college IDDL Advisory Council representatives regarding targeted programming; working with individual colleges to develop 3-5 year distance learning plans based on market opportunities.

- 4.3** Collaborate with the eight colleges, the Graduate School and the Outreach Division to increase extended campus graduate enrollment through the use of distance and distributed learning technologies. (*University strategy 3.2g*)

Status: A 167% growth in the number of televised courses delivered to extended campuses from Spring 1998 to Spring 1999. Discussions held with colleges and extended campus centers regarding expanding course offerings. First delivery of IVC courses to extended campuses for summer; 10 courses delivered.

- 4.4** Continue expanding the on-line summer session concept university-wide where qualified students can take web-based and hybrid courses anytime from anywhere. (*University strategies 3.4a, 3.4b.*)

Status: Online summer school concept is operating year round. Enrollment for online Spring semester courses is 1023, a 23% increase over Fall 1998; Summer 1999 Online summer school course offerings total 35 courses, a 69.5% increase over summer 1998.

- 4.5** In collaboration with the eight colleges, the Graduate School, and other appropriate entities, target, develop and begin delivery of online certificate and degree programs while ensuring that university standards and consistency are maintained. (*University strategy 3.4a & 3.4d*)

Status: Currently working with colleges to develop 3-5 year plans for distance learning course and program offerings.

- 4.6** Through collaborative efforts with the Offices of Continuing Education and Public Service Programs and the eight colleges, identify and target courses and programs, which address the university's seven cross-cutting initiatives for delivery to business and industry through distance and distributed learning technologies. (*University strategies 3.3i.2 & 3.3m, 3.4I, 3.4g*)

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Status: Delivering 9 part series for VA Dept of Health on Water Treatment; developed major technology upgrade plan for Hotel Roanoke; discussions on program development with Marriott Corp., Ernst & Young; Currently working with colleges to develop 3-5 year plans for distance learning course and program offerings.

GOAL 5: Explore New Funding Strategies/Models

Objectives:

- 5.1** Establish a university-wide funding mechanism which promotes the development and delivery of distance and distributed learning courses. *(University strategies 3.1, 3.4c)*

Status: Developed and submitted IDDL Policy proposals for adjusting tuition rates to support distance learning, breaking down the 3 –credit hour/3 – course model, in-state/out-of-state tuition rates, and electronic payment for IDDL courses.

- 5.2** Collaboratively develop potential funding models for the development and delivery of distance learning courses and programs which include departmental and faculty revenue sharing and cost recovery. *(University strategies 3.4b, 3.4c, 3.4d)*

Status: Currently exploring potential scenarios, policy proposals submitted

- 5.3** Collaborate with CIL, CEUT and other university entities and initiatives to provide faculty incentives, which support the development of courses to be delivered through the Open Campus. *(University strategies 3.4c)*

Status: Collaborating with CIL and CEUT; IDDL offered course development stipends for summer 1999: initiated college course development liaison program to assist colleges with course development, enhance communication, provide for knowledge sharing and course design consistency.

- 5.4** In collaboration with the university community, develop a major legislative initiative to significantly expand access to a Virginia Tech education through distance and distributed learning. *(University strategies 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6)*

Status: Initiative prepared and waiting to be submitted.

- 5.5** Provide targeted funding to departments and faculty to develop and deliver distance and distributed learning courses in high need areas. (*University strategies 3.4c*)

Status: Offered course development stipends for summer 1999 to bring nearly completed web-based courses online; initiated college course development liaison program to assist colleges with course development, enhance communication, provide for knowledge sharing and course design consistency.

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WORK PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

September 10, 1999

- Institute established and partially funded
- IDDL Advisory Board established
- IDDL Policy Board established
- Major assessments of Spring and Summer '99 distance learning efforts underway
- SACS recommendations addressed or being addressed
- Improvements in VTOLine
- IDDL web page established
- Increased support of Scholarly Communications Project
- Collaborative efforts with all colleges, Outreach Division, Libraries, Student Affairs, and Extension Services
- Improved training program for faculty
- Rapid Course Development Teams
 - 15 new courses completed
- 18 Faculty supported through course development awards
- U.S. History Course Online Test funded
- College Course Development Liaison Program Started
- Increased marketing efforts
 - Newspapers
 - Brochures
- 167% growth in number of televised courses delivered to extended campus centers from Spring '98 to Spring '99
 - 10 IVC courses delivered over summer '99
- 23% increase from Fall '98 to Spring '99 in online course enrollments
- 142% increase in online course offerings from Summer '98 to Summer '99
- 5140 enrollments for 1998/99

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- Development of five IDDL policy proposals
- Major legislative initiative developed