

## **DISTANCE LEARNING**

**Submitted for:** Information.

**Summary:** This two-part information item presents a summary of Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) regulatory authority relative to distance learning programs, and an update on the development of distance learning opportunities available to Illinois residents from in-state and out-of-state institutions. Illinois approval statutes have served to protect the quality of degrees offered by Illinois-based institutions during a period of burgeoning off-campus and distance learning activity. Budgetary and policy initiatives of the Board have fostered and encouraged the development of off-campus and distance learning programs to address the needs of underserved populations. Consistent with statutory authorities, the Board has adopted into policy criteria designed to assure that off-campus and distance learning programs meet standards equivalent to those of traditional programs. The Board has the responsibility to approve institutions and programs that meet quality standards established by the Board.

There has been tremendous growth in distance learning opportunities over the last ten years. Personal computers and Internet connections give residents of Illinois easy access to literally thousands of distance learning opportunities. Board initiatives also have enhanced distance-learning opportunities. The growth in distance learning raises several issues of concern, such as the effectiveness of distance learning, the level of student-faculty interaction, and student selection of quality programs.

**Action Requested:** None.



STATE OF ILLINOIS  
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**DISTANCE LEARNING**

This two-part information item presents a summary of Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) regulatory authority relative to distance learning programs, and a status update on the development of distance learning opportunities available to Illinois residents from in-state and out-of-state institutions.

Item 8A presents a brief review of private college approval standards, the scope of IBHE's responsibilities with respect to program approval, and the application of existing approval standards to traditional and nontraditional institutions and delivery systems. Item 8B presents a broad overview of distance learning opportunities for Illinois residents.

This two-part item makes the following key points:

- Illinois approval statutes provide specifically for the approval of nonresidential (i.e. distance learning) institutions.
- Through a variety of budgetary and policy initiatives, the Board has fostered and encouraged off-campus and distance learning to address the needs of underserved populations. These include: Illinois Century Network, Illinois Virtual Campus, Illinois Video Education Network, and the Illinois Digital Academic Library.
- In July 1997, the Board amended its off-campus policies to include criteria designed to assure that the quality of distance learning degree programs meets or exceeds that of traditional degree programs.
- Illinois institutions have set a high quality standard for distance learning programs.
- The Board has the responsibility to approve institutions and programs that meet the standards established by the Board in policy and rule.
- Nationally, the number of distance learning courses, programs, and enrollments more than doubled between 1995 and 1998. It is projected that this level of growth will continue. Illinois has experienced similar growth.
- Addressing the issue of quality is a matter of resource allocation and providing the means for institutions to invest in appropriate curricula, faculty development, and, especially, high quality academic and support services that are too frequently not available to off-campus students.
- Providing quality is a matter of continued oversight and involvement on the part of Illinois higher education so that educational institutions fully understand the potential and limits of this new medium.

- The Board of Higher Education can assist institutions by assessing statewide needs for online programming, by developing cooperative mechanisms that support and extend the reach of quality online programs, by providing up-to-date information about what works and what does not, and by creating a website which will provide consumers with the information they need to make wise decisions.

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**PROGRAM APPROVAL STANDARDS  
AND THE CHALLENGE OF DISTANCE LEARNING**

**Statutory Authorities**

The Illinois Board of Higher Education administers the “The Private College Act” and “The Academic Degree Act,” two regulatory statutes that require independent colleges and universities to obtain IBHE authorization to operate and to grant degrees in Illinois. Institutions subject to these acts are required to obtain degree-granting authorization for each new degree program offered at an approved location.<sup>1</sup>

Not all of Illinois’ 127 independent institutions are subject to the approval requirements of these acts. Institutions established prior to 1945 are “grandfathered,” meaning that they are exempt at their original location from the requirement to seek IBHE approval to operate and grant degrees. **Appendix A** provides a list of grandfathered institutions. These institutions must receive approval to operate and grant degrees at new locations, but may offer their degrees through correspondence or over the Internet without restriction.<sup>2</sup>

Out-of-state institutions, both private and public, must receive IBHE approval to offer degrees in Illinois only if they have established or intend to establish some kind of physical presence in the state. Institutions offering correspondence degrees or Internet-based instruction from other states are generally not required to seek IBHE approval. **Appendix A** lists Illinois independent colleges and out-of-state institutions presently authorized to operate in Illinois.

Two strengths of Illinois approval statutes have allowed these statutes, enacted in 1945 and 1961, respectively, to weather significant change in the character of institutions and programs over time. First, the acts clearly contemplated and permit nonresidential instruction. The Academic Degree Act provides specifically that Illinois nonresidential (i.e. distance learning) institutions may award degrees and qualify as degree granting institutions if they otherwise meet standards set by the Board. A second strength has been the reliance of these acts on criteria that

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to 1979, responsibility for regulation of private colleges resided with the Illinois Office of Education (now known as the Illinois State Board of Education). In 1979, this responsibility was transferred to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. During that same year, IBHE adopted administrative rules establishing the procedures and criteria that now govern the award of operating and degree-granting approval.

<sup>2</sup> Rules adopted by the Board in 1979 and the off-campus policies adopted in 1984 require all Illinois institutions, including grandfathered institutions, to obtain IBHE approval to operate and grant degrees at each new location. “New location” was defined as a community college district within which an institution had not previously offered degrees and instruction. In 1999, IBHE policies were amended to enlarge the concept of location from a community college district to a larger IBHE approval district. The change permits institutions greater latitude in delivering coursework within a limited geographic range of their original campus.

are responsive to institutions' unique objectives and to growth and change within the academy as a whole.

### **Approval of Independent Institutions and Degree Programs**

There are two steps in the approval process for independent colleges. Institutions must first seek and obtain *approval to operate* a postsecondary degree-granting institution. Such approval permits the institution to begin offering courses leading toward planned degree programs. Independent institutions must also obtain *degree-granting authority* under the Academic Degree Act. Degree-granting authority is required for each new degree program offered by the institution at a given location.<sup>3</sup>

**Operating Authority.** To receive approval to operate, an institution must first show that its mission and objectives are appropriate for a degree-granting institution. It must then demonstrate that curricular content, faculty and administrators, facilities, instructional resources, and financial resources are adequate to permit achievement of these objectives. Institutions must also submit catalogs and promotional materials so that staff may ascertain whether these fairly and accurately present those material facts that would affect a student's decision to enroll and persist in the program. The Private College Act provides that upon filing of an application for a Certificate of Approval the Board shall make an examination to ascertain whether approval criteria have been met, and "If the examination shows that the applicant has such qualifications a certificate of approval *shall be issued.*" [Italics added]

**Degree-granting Authority.** To receive degree authorization, an institution must show that the objectives of the proposed degree program are appropriate to the degree title and show with some specificity that the curriculum, faculty, and instructional resources are adequate to implement the new program. Institutions must also show that they can meet commitments to existing degree programs while making the investment required to initiate each proposed new degree, and that program descriptions in catalogs and instructional materials fairly and accurately represent the program and other material facts that would affect students' decision to enroll or persist in the program.

Clearly, benchmarks are required to assess the adequacy of faculty, facilities, instructional resources and curricula to serve an institution's mission and objectives. Such benchmarks are readily found in practices common to existing Illinois institutions with a history of successful operation. Illinois is home to several internationally recognized private and public universities and top tier private colleges, and Illinois' traditional private colleges and universities have set high standards of performance over the years. Practices of Illinois' traditional institutions create reliable quality standards for the evaluation of new institutions seeking to offer traditional programs. For example, staff can easily compare faculty/student ratios, per capita expenditures on direct instruction, contact/credit hour ratios, and assessment programs of established institutions to those of applicants seeking to offer traditional programs.

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<sup>3</sup> An institution must apply for and obtain degree-granting authority for each major and each level in which it plans to award degrees. For example, two separate authorizations would be required for the B.S. in Management and the B.A. in Political Science. Similarly, two separate authorizations would be required to grant the B.A. in Political Science and the M.A. in Political Science. In most cases, an institution is expected to obtain degree-granting authority within three years of receiving operating authority.

Established practices of traditional residential institutions provide less reliable benchmarks for institutions seeking approval for innovative or nontraditional systems of higher education delivery. Nontraditional institutions may demonstrate the adequacy of nontraditional practices by demonstrating that such practices produce educational outcomes that are equivalent to those of traditional programs. This focus on educational outcomes permits innovation within institutions and programs while serving to protect the value of a degree as “common currency” in the employment market.

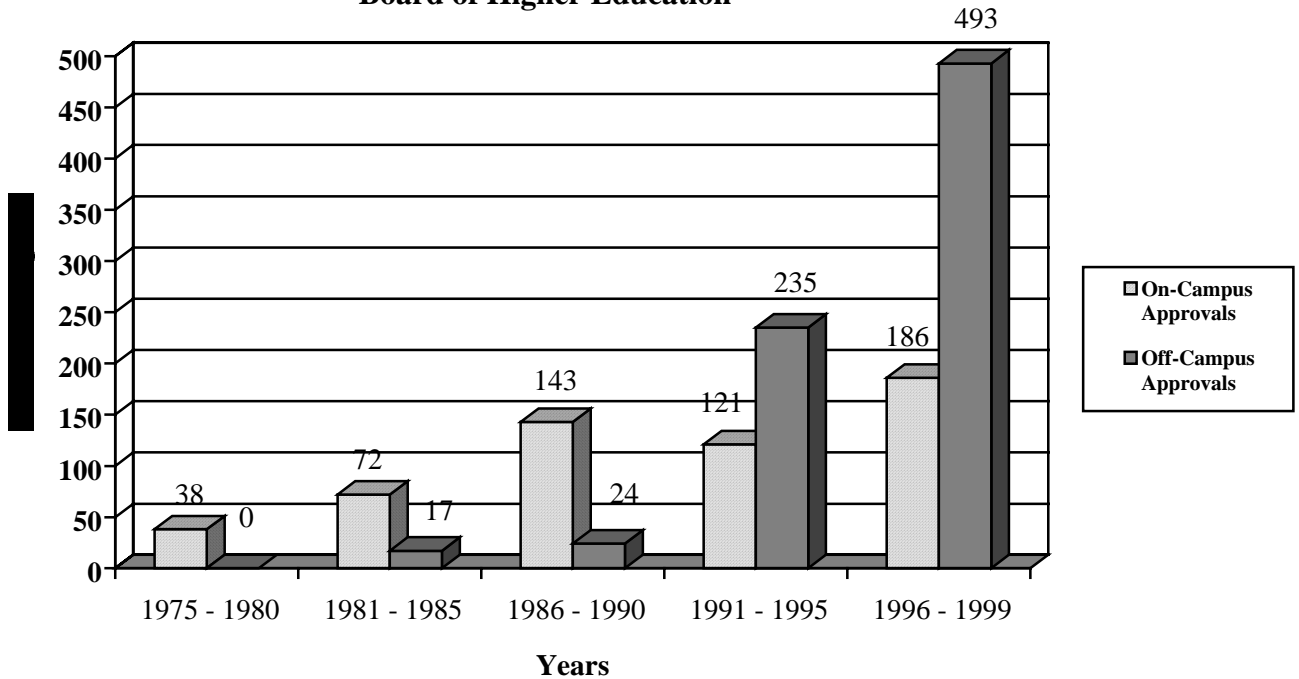
### Approval of Distance Education Programs

Approval statutes described above have successfully accommodated nontraditional institutions, programs, and ways of delivering instruction over the years, requiring only modest revisions to rules and policies. In fostering change, they have facilitated the achievement of policy purposes established by the Board.

In 1979, most Illinois colleges and universities were “bricks and mortar” institutions, and administrative rules addressed regulatory issues appropriate to on-campus delivery. By 1984, it became apparent that many students were inadequately served by traditional delivery, and IBHE policies were established to encourage off-campus programming in underserved areas. To assure the quality of such offerings, the Board adopted administrative rules requiring approval of institutions offering degrees at new locations. The increasing demand for off-campus programs is evident from the approval history of private colleges and universities since that time. **Figure 1** illustrates the dramatic increase in off-campus program approvals compared to on-campus since

Figure 1

#### Trends in Private College Degree Program Approvals by the Board of Higher Education



1975. From 1981 to 85, IBHE approved a total of 72 on-campus and 17 off-campus programs. By 1991-95, off-campus approvals surpassed on-campus approvals by a substantial margin (235 off-campus to 143 on-campus). Such growth continued through 1999, at which time changes in IBHE rules were implemented to enlarge off-campus approval districts.<sup>1</sup>

By 1996, it was clear that the Internet and digitally driven technologies provided new means for addressing the degree-completion needs of underserved populations, and that student need and consumer demand were driving the rapid development of innovative distance learning programs. In 1997, to facilitate the development of high quality distance learning programs, the Board adopted amendments to off-campus policies that translated existing approval criteria for the benefit of institutions seeking authorization for such programs. Adopted by the Board in July 1997, these new criteria represented refinements in interpretations of existing statutes, rules and policies consistent with the evolution of new delivery systems. **Appendix B** lists approval criteria as amended and adopted into policy in July 1997 for use in reviewing off-campus and distance learning degree programs.

As traditional institutions have moved courses and even entire programs to distance learning formats, what was once nontraditional is increasingly commonplace. Process measures and “best practices” are beginning to emerge even for distance learning programs. At a national level, the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the regional accrediting bodies have developed principles of good practice to guide the development and accreditation of such programs. Moreover, the distinction between traditional institutions and “distance learning institutions” is blurring as faculty incorporate electronic teaching aids into face-to-face learning situations, and traditional colleges implement practices such as electronic registration, Internet-based library access, instructor web-sites and threaded discussion groups or e-mail access to instructor assistance and advice. Increasingly, students enrolled in traditional on-campus programs are also concurrently enrolling in distance education courses to accommodate scheduling needs and accelerate progress toward their degree, and institutions offering both traditional and distance education courses find that students often enroll simultaneously in courses of both types.

Approved Illinois institutions have set a high quality standard for distance learning programs. Examples are Keller Graduate School of Management, where distance education students must take the exact same courses and examinations as on-campus students; and Cardean University, where course content is tested and endorsed by internationally recognized institutions such as Stanford, the University of Chicago, and Columbia University. IBHE regulatory authority does not extend to the monitoring of instructional delivery by individual faculty members. Indeed, higher institutions themselves have long left the particulars of course delivery to individual faculty, and this has not been changed by the advent of electronic delivery mechanisms. Nevertheless, it is clear that standards are evolving within the academy for the use of electronic media in delivery of courses and course segments by individual faculty members within accredited academic programs.

### **Benchmarks of Quality Based On Common Practice**

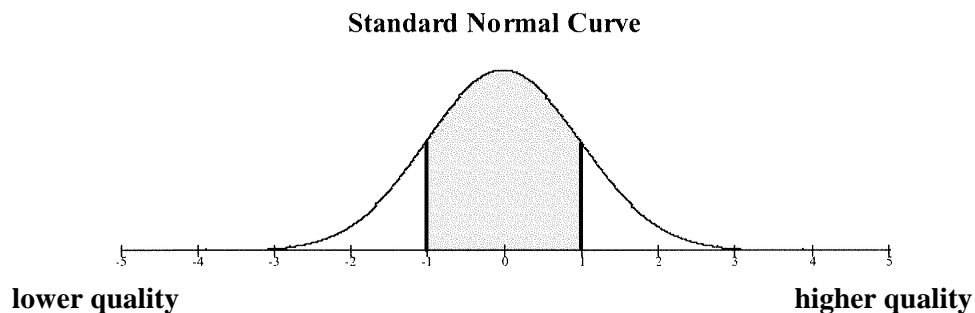
The standard of common practice acknowledges that common expectations of academic quality do attach to degree labels - and that institutions seeking to grant degrees must not deviate

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<sup>1</sup> New approvals do not represent the full extent of staff approval responsibilities or of proposed degree-granting activity in the state. An estimated nine in ten requests for operating authority from new institutions are withdrawn upon notification that staff will take a negative recommendation to the Board.

significantly from standards that the public has come to rely upon from institutions of higher learning. **Figure 2** illustrates the standard of common practice using a normal curve, where the shaded area represents the standard range of program quality, and the bottom of this range represents the minimum standard required for approval. The model acknowledges that there is a natural range in quality among institutions, as well as maturation and change within the academy.

**Figure 2**



Generally, staff looks to Illinois-based institutions to establish standards of common practice. Illinois has a rich history of academic excellence, and numerous institutions of national reputation, and it is this standard of excellence the legislature sought to protect in enacting state regulatory statutes to protect Illinois consumers from substandard or fraudulent degrees.<sup>2</sup> One implication of using an Illinois standard is that institutions operating legally in other states may be denied approval in Illinois based on their failure to meet Illinois standards of quality.

A related implication is that state and institutional standards set for Illinois public institutions often significantly impact applicable approval standards. For example, standards set by the Illinois public community college system weigh heavily in staff's analysis of new associate degree programs because Illinois community colleges conduct the balance of degree-granting activity culminating in the award of an associate degree. While Illinois has been identified as having relatively tough oversight compared to other states, it is the practices of existing Illinois public and private institutions that permit the enforcement of high standards.

### **Protecting Illinois Consumers in An Unregulated Environment**

A 1997 staff report to the IBHE noted that emerging distance learning technologies would present unprecedented challenges to the continuing effectiveness of existing statutes, rules and policies of the Board of Higher Education in protecting Illinois consumers from fraudulent or substandard degrees. A quick search of Internet-based degree programs demonstrates that this challenge is upon us. A search of *Yahoo!* shows that more than half of the distance learning

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<sup>2</sup> The Academic Degree Act provides, "It is the policy of this State to prevent deception of the public resulting from the offering, conferring and use of fraudulent or substandard degrees. Since degrees are constantly used by employers in judging the training of prospective employees, by public and private professional groups in determining qualifications for admission to and continuance of practice, and by the general public in assessing the extent of competence of persons engaged in a wide range of activities necessary to the general welfare, regulation by law of such evidences of academic achievement is in the public interest. To the same end, the protection of legitimate institutions and of those holding degrees from them is also in the public interest."

programs listed are offered by unaccredited institutions, placing Illinois consumers at serious risk when selecting among Internet-based programs.

Although existing statutes, rules and policies still permit Illinois to insure the quality of programs falling under their jurisdiction, they do not protect Illinois consumers from distance learning programs that originate in other states, such as many now offered over the Internet. Some states place virtually no regulatory restrictions on domestic institutions wishing to grant degrees; several others protect their own residents, but do not regulate degree-granting activity directed at out-of-state consumers. This means that Illinois consumers face an array of degree program offerings from out-of-state providers who are not subject to IBHE approval statutes, programs ranging in quality from excellent to fraudulent.

Many Illinois residents are unable to attend traditional residential institutions. As the trend toward increasing numbers of commuter (off-campus) students is followed by a trend toward “at home” students, it may be that the best protection Illinois can offer consumers is to encourage Illinois institutions of known quality to develop and deliver high quality distance learning programs.

### **Conclusion**

Budgetary and policy initiatives adopted by the Board have fostered and encouraged off-campus and distance learning to address the needs of underserved populations. Illinois approval statutes provide specifically for the approval of nonresidential (i.e. distance learning) institutions and have served to protect the quality of degrees offered by Illinois-based institutions during a period of burgeoning off-campus and distance learning activity. Quality standards for Illinois’ traditional institutions are widely recognized to be higher than average on a nationwide scale. Consistent with statutory authorities, the Board has adopted policy criteria designed to assure that off-campus and distance learning programs meet standards equivalent to those maintained by traditional Illinois degree granting institutions. The Board has the responsibility to approve institutions and programs that meet quality standards established by the Board in administrative rules and policies.

## Appendix A

Following is a listing of Illinois degree-granting institutions approved under the Private College Act and/or the Academic Degree Act, institutions grandfathered or exempted under these acts, and out-of-state degree-granting institutions approved to operate in Illinois. Grandfathered institutions are exempted only within their original approval region, and must receive approval to operate and grant degrees at new locations.

### Approved Illinois Institutions

Adler School of Professional Psychology  
American Academy of Art  
American Islamic College  
American Schools of Prof. Psychology  
Brisk Rabbinical College  
Cardean University  
Career Colleges of Chicago  
Catholic Theological Union  
Center for Psychoanalytic Study  
Chicago School of Prof. Psychology  
Christian Life College  
College of Office Technology  
Cooking & Hospitality Institute of Chicago  
DeVry Institute. of Technology-Chicago  
DeVry Institute of Technology-DuPage  
East-West University  
Erikson Inst. Adv. Study Child Dev.  
Finch Univ. Health Sciences/Chicago  
Medical School  
Fox College  
Gem City College  
Harrington Inst. of Interior Design  
IBEW-NECA Technical Institute  
Illinois Inst. of Art  
Illinois Inst. of Art at Schaumburg  
Illinois Baptist College  
Institute for Clinical Social Work  
International Acad. of Merchandising  
and Design, Limited  
ITT Technical Institute-Burr Ridge  
ITT Technical Institute-Hoffman Est.  
ITT Technical Institute-Matteson  
Keller Graduate School. of Mgmt.  
Knowledge Sys. Institute  
Lake Forest Graduate School of Mgmt.  
Lexington College  
Midstate College  
Midwest College of Oriental Medicine  
Midwestern University  
Morrison Inst. of Technology  
NAES College

National University of Health Sciences  
Northwestern Business College  
Northwestern Business College-SW Campus  
Robert Morris College  
Rockford Business College  
Rush University  
Saint Augustine College  
St. Sava Serbian Orthodox School  
of Theology  
Taylor Business Institute  
Telshe Yeshiva-Chicago  
Trinity College of Nursing  
Westwood College of Technology-O'Hare  
Westwood College of Technology-  
RiverOaks  
Worsham College of Mortuary Science

### “Grandfathered” or Exempt Illinois Institutions

Augustana College  
Aurora University  
Barat College  
Benedictine University  
Blackburn College  
Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing  
Bradley University  
Chicago Baptist Institute  
Chicago National Coll. of Naprapathy  
Chicago Theological Seminary  
Columbia College Chicago  
Concordia University  
DePaul University  
Dominican University  
Elmhurst College  
Eureka College  
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary  
Greenville College  
Hebrew Theological College  
Henry J. Kutsch Coll. of Nursing  
Illinois College

**“Grandfathered” or Exempt Illinois Institutions, cont’d.**

Illinois College Optometry  
Illinois Inst. of Technology  
Illinois Wesleyan University  
Institute for Psychoanalysis  
Jewish Univ. of America  
John Marshall Law School  
Judson College  
Kendall College  
Knox College  
Lake Forest College  
Lakeview College of Nursing  
Lewis University  
Lincoln Christian College  
Lincoln College  
Loyola Univ. of Chicago  
Lutheran School of Theology-Chicago  
MacCormac College  
MacMurray College  
McCormick Theological Seminary.  
McKendree College  
Meadville-Lombard Theo. Sch.  
Millikin University  
Monmouth College  
National-Louis University  
Moody Bible Institute  
North Central College  
North Park University  
Northern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Northwestern University  
Olivet Nazarene University  
Principia College  
Quincy University  
Rockford College  
Roosevelt University  
Saint Anthony Col. of Nursing  
Saint Francis Medical Ctr. College  
of Nursing  
St. John’s College  
Saint Xavier University  
Scholl Coll. Podiatric Medicine  
School of the Art Inst. of Chicago  
Seabury-Western Theol. Seminary.  
Shimer College  
Spertus College of Judaica  
Springfield College in IL  
Trinity Christian College  
Trinity International University.  
University of Chicago

University of St. Mary of the Lake  
Mundelein Seminary  
University of St. Francis  
VanderCook College of Music  
West Suburban Coll. of Nursing  
Wheaton College

**Approved Out-of-State Institutions Operating in Illinois**

American Technical Institute (TN)  
Antioch University at Seattle (WA)  
Calumet College of Saint Joseph (IN)  
Case Western Reserve University (OH)  
Chapman College (CA)  
Columbia College (MO)  
Concordia University (WI)  
Covenant Theological Seminary (MO)  
Culver-Stockton College (MO)  
Ferris State University (MI)  
Franklin University of Columbus (OH)  
Gallaudet University (DC)  
George Peabody College (TN)  
Hannibal-LaGrange College (MO)  
Harding Undergrad. Schl. of Religion (TN)  
Herzing College of Technology (WI)  
The John Hopkins University (MD)  
Iowa State University (IA)  
Lindenwood College (MO)  
Loma Linda University (CA)  
Marycrest College (IA)  
Maryville University, St. Louis (MO)  
Mid Continent Baptist College (KY)  
Mount Saint Clare College (IA)  
National Technology University (CO)  
Northwood University (MI)  
Nova Southeastern University (FL)  
Pacific College of Oriental Medicine (CA)  
Park College (MO)  
Penn State University at Ogontz Campus (PA)  
St. Francis College (IN)  
St. Mary’s College and University (MD)  
Southern Baptist Theol. Seminary (KY)  
University of Iowa (IA)  
University of Northern Iowa (IA)  
University of Notre Dame (IN)  
Viterbo College (WI)  
Walden University (MN)  
Webster University (MO)

## Appendix B

### Approval Criteria for the Approval and Review of Off-Campus and Distance Learning Degree Programs

Listed below under the major headings of Institutional Mission and Program Objectives, Academic Control, Caliber and Content, Faculty and Staff, Facilities and Equipment, Finance, Information and Statewide Needs are Revised Approval Criteria for the Approval and Review of Off-campus and Distance Learning Degree Programs. Include are criteria adopted by the Board in 1989 in revisions to off-campus policies, along with criteria adopted in 1997 for the approval of distance learning programs. Distance learning criteria adopted in 1997 appear in italics.

#### **Institutional Mission and Program Objectives**

- The objectives of the unit of instruction are consistent with the mission of the college or university.
- The objectives of the unit of instruction are consistent with what the unit title implies.
- *Involvement in distance learning is consistent with the overall mission of the institution, and policies regarding distance learning are integrated into the provider's overall policy framework.*
- *The institution has articulated units of instruction offered at a distance with instruction offered in a traditional format.*

#### **Academic Control**

- The design, conduct, and evaluation of the unit of instruction are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance, and clear provision is made for assuring a high level of academic performance of faculty and students.
- *A specific degree-granting institution maintains academic control over each degree program and is responsible for assuring the continued quality of the program whenever and wherever it is offered.*

#### **Caliber and Content**

- The caliber and content of the curriculum insure that the objectives of the unit of instruction will be achieved.
- The breadth and depth of the curriculum are consistent with what the degree program title implies.
- Provision is made for guidance and counseling of students, evaluations of student performance, continuous monitoring of progress of students toward their educational objectives and appropriate academic record keeping.

- Course content, coverage and academic standards for off-campus courses are consistent with those for on-campus courses.
- Students have appropriate training in the use of technologies for learning or are provided with the necessary training prior to beginning the program.
- The institution has developed systems to assure the credibility of assessment and evaluation of students' achievement.
- *Learning outcomes for distance learning are defined and appropriately calibrated to traditional expectations for graduates of traditional programs.*
- *The learning content is appropriate to desired outcomes for distance learning.*
- *The learning design for distance learning programs is evaluated on a regular basis for effectiveness by the entity seeking approval, with findings utilized as a basis for improvement.*
- *Technology employed to deliver instruction is appropriate to program content and facilitates learning.*

#### **Faculty and Staff**

- The preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met.
- The academic preparation of faculty and staff, as evidenced by degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities.
- The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the curriculum, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit of instruction, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation.
- Support personnel, including counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors and technical staff, have background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities at the level expected in comparable positions in higher education.
- Off-campus instructors are evaluated in a manner consistent with that of regular on-campus faculty.
- *The institution maintains as regular, continuing employees of the institution faculty who have appropriate knowledge and skills to review, evaluate and update its programs delivered by distance learning.*
- *The institution provides faculty and staff with the training and technical support needed to use its distance learning technologies effectively.*

## **Facilities and Equipment**

- Facilities, equipment and instructional resources necessary to support high quality are available and maintained.
- Library holdings and acquisitions necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship are available, accessible, and maintained
- *Where technology is employed to deliver instruction, the institution has a plan and an infrastructure for using technology that supports its learning goals and activities.*

## **Finances**

- The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction are sufficient to ensure that the stated objectives can be attained, and that the faculty, staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction can be acquired and maintained.
- Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction are based upon supportable estimates of general revenue, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts.
- Financial affairs are conducted in a manner consistent with ethical business practice, including the maintenance of appropriate financial statements.
- *The institution makes a financial and administrative commitment to maintain distance learning programs through completion and to support faculty and learner services needed to ensure an effective learning environment.*

## **Information**

- The information which the institution provides for students and the public accurately describes the unit of instruction offered, program objectives, length of program, residency requirements, if any, schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the course of study, cancellation and refund policies, and such other material facts concerning the institution and the unit of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. Such information shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment.
- *All the information the institution employs to inform students and other consumers of higher education is appropriately accessible to distant learners.*

## **Statewide Needs**

- The unit of instruction is educationally and economically justified based on the educational priorities and needs of the citizens of Illinois.
- The unit of instruction meets a need that is not currently met by the configuration of existing institutions and programs at the unit of instruction site.

- The unit of instruction is justified by the proposing institution as appropriate to its academic mission.
- Where nontraditional delivery systems are proposed by public institutions, such delivery systems are educationally and economically justified based on the educational priorities and needs of the citizens of Illinois.

### **Accreditation and Licensure**

- Appropriate steps have been taken to assure that regional accreditation of the institution is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.
- Appropriate steps have been taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the program are maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.
- Institutional operating authority, and in the case of off-campus programs, degree-granting authority has been obtained from applicable governmental bodies and governing boards.