

**COMPREHENSIVE**  
**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
**DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND COURSES**

Auburn University

*Reviewed and Approved*  
*by*  
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*and*  
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*by*  
*The Board of Trustees*

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**POLICIES**  
**Distance Education Programs and Courses**  
Auburn University

**I. PURPOSE, MISSION, AND INSTITUTIONAL ACCOMMODATION**

**A. Purpose**

1. ***Access to Auburn Educational Services:*** Distance education programs and courses at Auburn University are intended to provide convenient access to the educational resources of the university to the citizens of the state of Alabama and to others around the globe who have a need for Auburn expertise.
2. ***Enhancement of Campus Resources:*** Distance education can also provide a mechanism for traditional, campus-based students to access additional educational opportunities as an adjunct to their regular residential studies.

**B. Mission**

1. ***Statewide Responsibility:*** Auburn University's Land Grant mission sets the context for the use of distance education methodologies in addressing institutional goals for Outreach. The application of these methodologies is appropriate to create an enlightened and liberally educated citizenship, to provide professional development opportunities, to enhance the global competitiveness of business and industry, to inform public policy development and enhance the effectiveness of public institutions, to foster economic development, to provide convenient access to educational programs, and to accommodate regional disparities in educational services.

**C. Institutional Accommodation**

1. ***Policy Context:*** Unless otherwise provided, all Board and university policies, standards, and guidelines for on- and off-campus instruction apply to distance education
2. ***Campus-Wide Involvement:*** All academic units of the University shall have an opportunity to participate in providing distance education programs and shall be encouraged to provide distance education wherever there is a need.
3. ***Institutional Adjustment for Non-Traditional Students:*** Programmatic and administrative procedures should be developed to accommodate populations that cannot easily access traditional campus-based study at Auburn due to constraints of time, distance, disability, and personal and professional issues.

To be in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, all programs, services, and activities offered by Auburn University must be accessible to and usable by persons with documented disabilities who have met the technical and academic standards for admission. (*Consult the Distance Education Program Rehabilitation Act/ADA Guidelines document available in the Program for Students with Disabilities Office or the Distance Learning Office.*)

4. ***Support Infrastructure:*** The University shall assure that the institution's administrative policies and procedures allow for an effective and efficient distance education support infrastructure with sufficient resource allocation to maintain the quality of offerings and services.
5. ***Coordination:*** The University shall maintain a central repository for distance education program information and a support structure for facilitating the development and refinement of distance education programs, policies, procedures, and services university-wide.

## II. DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### A. Program Offerings

1. **Mission Compatibility:** Programs offered via distance education shall be consistent with the role and mission of Auburn University and the offering units.
2. **Equivalency:** There shall be no distinctions between programs offered through distance education and those offered on campus.
3. **Extension of Campus-Based Offerings:** Only approved programs offered on campus shall be offered via distance education.
4. **Selection Authority:** Selection of programs to be offered via distance education is the purview of the appropriate academic unit.
5. **Faculty Oversight:** Qualified faculty shall provide oversight of a program that is offered via distance education to insure currency of the program, its courses, and resources.
6. **Program Value:** Each program of study shall be coherent and complete and shall result in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded.
7. **Internal Program Approval:** Prior to implementation, proposed distance education programs are to be reviewed and approved by the process as adopted by the Board in August of 1997 and subsequently approved by Academic Affairs. (This procedural document, **Distance Education Program and Tuition Proposal and Review Procedures**, is located in Section III of this document). [Board of Trustees, August 1997; effective January 1, 1998]

### B. Program Accreditation and Approvals

1. **External Program Approval:** As necessary and appropriate, a proposed program shall complete the approval processes of state, regional, or other agencies or associations germane to the conduct of the academic program at Auburn University (i.e., ACHE, SACs).
2. **Accreditations:** Distance education programs shall meet the same requirements as resident programs holding special accreditations.

### C. Program Maintenance

1. **Program Continuation:** Once implemented, the offering academic units and the university commit to ongoing support, both financial and technical, and to the continuation of the program for a period sufficient to enable admitted students to complete the program.

## III. DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES

### A. Course Offerings

1. **Selection:** Courses delivered via distance education shall be regular Auburn University academic department courses approved through the usual curriculum approval processes as defined by the appropriate academic units.
2. **Applicability:** There shall be no distinctions between courses offered through distance education and those offered on campus.
3. **Rigor/Outcomes:** Courses offered via distance education shall have the same rigor and expected outcomes of resident offerings.

4. **Prerequisites:** Distance education courses shall carry the same curriculum prerequisites for Auburn University admitted students. Non-Auburn University students shall demonstrate to the course instructor the necessary background for successful matriculation in a particular course.

**B. Course Approvals**

1. **Reconfigured Course Review:** When a course is reconfigured for delivery via distance education methods, it shall be reviewed by the appropriate curriculum review procedures outlined by the specific department and college/school, and by Academic Affairs (Curriculum Committee, Graduate Council). (The document, **Distance Education Course Development, Review, and Implementation Procedures**, is located in Section II of this document)

**C. Course Evaluation and Maintenance**

1. **Standard Course Evaluations:** Distance education course offerings shall be evaluated according to the course evaluation procedures in effect for campus-based courses.
2. **Additional Evaluations:** Additional items to be evaluated shall include the effectiveness and efficiency of delivery systems, academic resources, student services, and access to faculty.
3. **Documentation and Use:** Records of evaluations and the analyses of the evaluations must be kept on file, as well as documentation of the proactive use of the results of the evaluations in the enhancement of course offerings.

**D. Examinations**

1. **Proctored Examinations:** Students in distance education courses shall take examinations under the supervision of an approved proctor. Proctors shall be verified and exams shall be sent directly to the proctor who will manage the examination in a secure manner, requiring students to present a picture ID.

**E. Accessibility**

1. **Accessibility Issues:** A number of accessibility issues require accommodation in the design and implementation of distance education courses. The Program for Students with Disabilities Office shall be contacted for consultation regarding access issues.

**F. Library Support**

1. **Use of Library Resources:** Faculty shall be encouraged to incorporate the use of library resources in their distance education courses.
2. **Library Liaison:** The University shall maintain a Distance Education Librarian Liaison to promote and coordinate library services, programs, agreements and policies/procedures for distance education students and faculty. These services are expected to include document delivery, electronic access to reference services, reserves, interlibrary loan, and a Web page that includes ready links to services and contacts and self-help modules.
3. **Usage Statistics:** The University Library shall retain statistical information regarding library usage by distance education students, types of services requested and used, problems encountered, etc.

## G. Independent Learning (Asynchronous) Courses

1. **Selection of Independent Learning Courses:** Faculty may elect to offer Asynchronous distance education courses for off-campus clientele through the Independent Learning Program. These courses do not include on-load faculty course assignments serving on-campus students via on-line delivery (Distributed Courses).

2. **General Policy Context:** Independent Learning asynchronous courses generally follow the policies outlined in this document and the specific procedures for the Independent Learning office. (See **Distance Education Course Development, Review and Implementation Procedures**, in Section II of this document).

3. Students in Independent Learning courses have two enrollment options:

a) **Graded Option.**

This option allows an AU student to elect the “Graded” option at the time of enrollment, requiring the student to enroll in the course at the beginning of a semester, complete the Independent Learning (Asynchronous) course within the current semester, following all academic rules and regulations pertaining to on-campus course matriculation, and having the Independent Learning “Graded” option course grade calculated into the Auburn student’s GPA. This option is available only to admitted Auburn University students.

b) **Extended Option.**

This option is wherein the student (*AU or non-AU*) may enroll at any time and take up to nine months to complete the course. Successful completion generates degree-applicable college credit, but the grade earned in the Independent Learning course under the extended option does not affect an Auburn student’s GPA (*Grade Point Average*).

4. **Withdrawal.**

a) AU Independent Learning students in the “graded” option shall follow the withdrawal regulations in effect for campus-based courses.

b) Independent Learning students (AU or non-AU) under the “Extended” option may withdraw within 30 days from an Independent Learning course with no grade penalty.

5. **Refunds.**

a) AU Independent Learning students in the “graded” option shall follow the course refund regulations pertaining to campus-based courses.

b) Independent Learning students in the “extended” option will receive a refund of tuition, less \$30, if a course is dropped in writing within 30 days. Any completed assignments submitted and graded will be charged a \$10 grading fee.

6. **Financial Aid.**

Financial aid for eligible students shall be reviewed only for the term of initial enrollment for Independent Learning courses, and not in subsequent terms if the enrollment continues (for “extended” option students) into additional term(s).

7. ***Enrollment Limits.***

- a) A student may not enroll in more than two Independent Learning courses at a time.
- b) AU students may enroll in a third course with written approval from the appropriate dean.
- c) A maximum of 25% of the total semester hours for the baccalaureate degree may be earned through correspondence or asynchronous Independent Learning courses by an AU-matriculating student. Further limitations for AU students state that a maximum of 12 semester hours of the final year may be earned through correspondence or asynchronous Independent Learning courses and only a maximum of 10 semester hours of the final year may be earned through correspondence or asynchronous Independent Learning courses if fewer than two semesters in residence have been completed.

8. ***Tuition Rate.***

The tuition rate for Independent Learning courses is currently set by the Board of Trustees. (\$97 per semester hour and \$40 per course registration fee for 2002-2003)

9. ***Enrollment Approval.***

AU students must obtain written approval from the appropriate dean and advisor prior to enrollment in an Independent Learning course. The advisor is to check for academic suspension, overload, graduation readiness, availability of an on-campus section of the course, and appropriateness of the particular course for the student's program.

10. ***Athletes.***

Auburn athletes generally cannot take independent learning courses while away from campus to fulfill requirements for cumulative hours and satisfactory progress. However, AU athletes may take independent learning courses while in residence on the AU campus. In all cases, AU students should consult their academic advisors to assure that enrollment in a particular independent learning course is appropriate for their program and status.

11. ***Applicability.***

Independent Learning (asynchronous) courses shall be applicable to degree programs consistent with the same courses as conducted on the AU campus.

#### **IV. FACULTY AND FACULTY SERVICES**

##### **A. Faculty Rights, Role and Responsibilities**

1. ***Course Oversight:*** All courses offered via distance education shall have a qualified faculty member approved and assigned by the appropriate department head.
2. ***Primacy of the Faculty:*** Faculty shall retain the primary responsibility and authority for the academic management and oversight of distance education courses and programs.

3. ***Control of Course Content:*** The assigned faculty member shall have full control of the content of the distance education course material.
4. ***Content Clearance:*** The faculty member shall be expected to deliver accurate and current information and shall not include in the content of the course anything which the faculty member knows to constitute libel, invasion of privacy, infringement of copyright or other literary rights, or otherwise violate the legal rights of any persons. (Review the TEACH Act)
5. ***Course Revisions:*** The faculty member retains the authority and the responsibility to produce any revised or supplemental materials in order to maintain or enhance the accuracy and quality of the distance education course. Expected updating of course material will be planned and methodically implemented with the appropriate support unit.
6. ***Intellectual Property Rights:*** (See Auburn University Copyright Policy)

#### **B. Faculty Qualifications**

1. ***Faculty Profile:*** In general, it is expected that the faculty assigned to distance education courses and programs shall have the same profile (*expertise, experience, rank*) as the faculty assigned to resident classes.
2. ***Faculty Development Opportunities:*** The University's distance education infrastructure shall provide development opportunities for faculty that will increase their awareness of distance education methodologies and improve their instructional skills.

#### **C. Faculty Support**

1. ***General Faculty Support:*** Faculty shall have appropriate services and resources to assure their effectiveness as distance educators and to assure an effective and efficient teaching and learning environment.
2. ***Telecommunications Support:*** The University shall provide adequate equipment, software, and communications access to faculty to support interaction with students, cooperating institutions and other faculty for approved programs and courses.
3. ***Course Development and Implementation Assistance:*** A distance education staff member shall be assigned for each course to provide design consultation, to aid the faculty member in the arrangement of services, to coordinate the production of course materials, to provide support during course implementation and evaluation in order to allow the faculty member to focus as much as possible on the content and delivery of instruction and on interaction with and the assessment of the learning of the students.
4. ***Technical Assistance to Individual Faculty:*** Each faculty member assigned to a distance education course shall receive consultation, training, implementation, and evaluation support from technical delivery systems professional staff to assure the effective and efficient use of the chosen delivery system.

#### **D. Faculty Recognition**

1. ***Recognition:*** Faculty shall receive appropriate recognition of teaching and scholarly activities related to distance education programs commensurate with their efforts in traditional activities and programs.

2. **Remuneration:** Faculty may be remunerated for any additional effort in serving distance education students as appropriate for the particular policies set by the individual department, college or school and in accordance with established University policy.

## V. STUDENTS, STUDENT SERVICES, AND LEARNING

### A. Student Background

1. **Admission Requirements:** Degree program entrance requirements for distance education students shall be the same as they are for campus-based students.
2. **Prerequisites:** Distance education students shall meet the same course prerequisites as do campus-based students.

### B. Information Provided Students

1. **Disclosure:** Distance education students shall receive clear, accurate, complete, and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, required technological competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, availability of academic resources, availability of student services, program/course costs and payment policies, dates, time frames and deadlines, academic policies and appeals processes, availability of disability accommodations and procedures for accessing these resources..

### C. Student Access to Resources and Services

1. **Academic Resource Access:** Distance education students shall be assured access to academic resources required for their distance education program..
2. **Student Services Access:** Distance education students shall have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services and student rights appropriate to support their learning and successful matriculation and comparable to those offered to traditional, on-campus users. Services should include all or most of the following: Admissions, Cashiers Office, Payment Processing (refunds, billing, etc.), Bookstore, Course Catalog, Academic advising, technical assistance, registration (Add/Drop), withdrawal from courses, transfers, reinstatements, financial aid information, academic calendar, student records, library services, Services for disabled students (American Disabilities Act accommodation), policies, procedures, and protocols for taking courses.
3. **Students With Disabilities:** The University shall provide appropriate program accommodation and support services for students with disabilities.
4. **Library Information:** Students shall be provided distance education library services information —via a short handout, World Wide Web, or other means—to be included by the instructor with the course materials for the students, and promulgate the availability of such a handout. Information regarding modem access to the university network should be included as well as the Distance Education librarian's contact information, and interlibrary loan forms.

## VI. PROGRAM INFORMATION DISSEMINATION GUIDELINES

Since distance education students have limited access and available time to collect information and carry out procedures related to application, admission, enrollment, and course activities, it

is important to include information regarding a distance education program in an organized and complete manner. The following information should appear on your program web site and/or accessible via links to other sites or on printed materials that the student may request.

- A. ***Name and accreditation of the Institution*** (Provide a link to the institution home page)
- B. ***Title of the program***, level, and academic home department and school/college (provide link/contact for the department and school/college home pages)
- C. ***Program Description***: purpose, approach, delivery method, audience, number of students applying/accepted/graduating, orientation possibilities, accreditations
- D. ***Program Requirements***: curriculum overview, credits required, prerequisites, electives, thesis/project requirements, campus residency requirements, field/lab/clinical work, faculty committee requirements, advising process, examination procedures, special local or personal resource needs (such as computer, software, tape player, etc.), required student technical skills, time frame limitations and expectations (provide link/contact for course listings for the program), special graduation requirements
- E. ***Admission Requirements and Procedures***: Expected student background and credentials, required test results, transcripts, letters, transfer credit policies, policies regarding enrollment prior to admission, application forms, application procedures, application deadlines, application fees, where to begin and who to contact (provide link/contact for appropriate admissions office)
- F. ***Cost of Program***: tuition and fees, additional expected costs, policies regarding payment of tuition and fees, deadlines, refund policies, policies regarding in-state or out-of-state fees, application, admission, graduation, etc. fees
- G. ***Financial Aid***: Availability of and procedures for accessing financial aid. Criteria. Who to contact. Other potential sources of financial support
- H. ***Upon Admission***: Student preparation and personal scheduling of program work, course selection, registration, advising, methods of communication with faculty and administrative support offices, etc. (Provide link/contact for expected course offering schedule for at least the coming year)
- I. ***Library resources*** and access procedures
- J. ***Computing services*** and access procedures
- K. ***Texts/Instructional Materials/Bookstore***: Indicate the way in which students will receive or may obtain texts and other instructional materials. (Provide link/contact for the bookstore)
- L. ***Changes in program***: Policies and procedures for student changes in program plan, department policies regarding scheduling of courses and cancellations
- M. ***Academic Integrity Policy*** and complaint and grievance procedures
- N. ***Students with Disabilities***: Policies and procedures for servicing students with disabilities. (Provide link/contact for appropriate support offices)

## VII. TECHNOLOGY

- A. ***Appropriateness of Technology***: Selection of technology for electronically delivered distance education courses and programs shall rest with the faculty and department offering such

courses and programs and shall be based primarily on pedagogical issues and student demographics.

- B. *Technical Infrastructure:*** The university college/school or academic unit infrastructure for the delivery of instruction via the Internet is expected to provide accommodation of the following:

- Secure and reliable programs, systems, servers, networks, and origination equipment
- Rapid recovery systems
- Adequate storage and backup systems
- Provide/software licenses (browsers, communications, course development, etc.)
- Systems management and maintenance
- Internet access and service
- Technical training and assistance for faculty and students
- Enterprise systems/electronic commerce

Delivery of instruction via the Internet must meet federal guidelines for accessibility. (Units must consult with the Students with Disabilities Office for guidelines.)

## VIII. DISTANCE EDUCATION FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Policies governing financial operations of distance education were approved by the Board of Trustees, August 1997; effective January 1, 1998; revised September 2000; effective January 1, 2001. See Section III, *Distance Education Program and Tuition Proposal and Review Process* in this document. Policy elements include the following:

- A. *Self-Supporting:*** Distance education programs and courses shall be self-supporting, where feasible.
- B. *Responsibility for Financial Stability:*** The offering academic department and appropriate dean's office have the responsibility for assuring the financial stability of a distance education offering in accordance with University policies and procedures.
- C. *Funding Mechanism:*** The University shall maintain a policy of allowing adequate revenue from a distance education program to be distributed to the offering unit in order to cover course and program costs.
- D. *Tuition Rates:*** Tuition rates for distance education programs and courses are determined based upon the additive costs of delivering each individual program or course.
- E. *Maximum Tuition Rates:*** The maximum allowable tuition rate for distance education courses may be raised each year based on the percentage increase in tuition approved by the Board of Trustees.
- F. *Single Rate/No Fees:*** All program and course costs, excluding books and materials if desired, shall be calculated as part of the total delivery costs and expressed as a single, per semester hour tuition rate.
- G. *Payment of Tuition:*** Policies regarding payment of tuition and tuition refunds shall generally follow the campus-based policies unless different policies are approved as part of the program proposal procedure.

## IX. EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

- A. Evaluation of Course Offerings**

1. ***Standard Evaluation:*** Each distance education course shall be evaluated by

students in the same manner as on-campus course offerings.

2. **Added Evaluation Items:** Additional response items shall include the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery systems, access to academic resources, access to faculty, and access to student services.
3. **Use of Evaluation Results:** Program heads shall review evaluation results with assigned faculty, support staff, and cooperating unit heads to facilitate the continual refinement of distance education course offerings.
4. **Record Keeping:** Consistent with the policies governing on-campus course evaluations, documentation of distance education course evaluations and of the proactive use of the results shall be maintained in the offering unit office. Summary reports shall be forwarded annually to the Distance Learning Office for analysis on a University-wide basis.

#### **B. Assessment of Programs**

1. **Standard Academic Assessment:** Each distance education program shall be assessed in the same manner and generally at the same frequency as the specific department's assessment of programs offered on campus. Elements covered in the assessment shall include educational effectiveness, student learning outcomes, and retention.
2. **Use of Results:** The program head shall review assessment results with assigned faculty, distance education and technical staff, and cooperating service unit heads to facilitate the continual refinement of the distance education program.
3. **Record Keeping:** Documentation of this process and of the proactive use of the results shall be maintained in the offering unit office and be available for review.

#### **C. Outcomes**

1. **Comparability:** Student learning in distance education programs shall compare favorably to student learning in campus-based programs.
2. **Record Keeping:** Documentation of outcomes shall be maintained in the offering unit office and be available for review.

### **X. REPORTING**

- A. **OIAP Reports:** Each academic year the Office of Institutional Analysis and Planning shall produce a report on credit distance education courses and programs which includes courses offered, enrollments, and credit hours produced sorted by college/school and department.
- B. **OIM Reports:** Each year the Office of Outreach Information and Marketing shall produce a report on non-credit distance education programs and courses which includes courses and programs offered, enrollments, and contact hours produced sorted by college/school and department..
- C. **Financial Reports:** Consistent with Board approved policy, distance education program heads shall submit annually to the Director of Distance Learning and Outreach Technology a financial summary report detailing program revenue and expenditures. These data will be used by the Office of the Vice President of University Outreach to assess the viability of each program in accordance with SACS guidelines and in consultation with the respective Dean.



**PART II**

**DISTANCE EDUCATION  
COURSE DEVELOPMENT, REVIEW,  
AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES**

Auburn University

*Approved by the Provost Council  
April 4, 2002*

**DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSE DEVELOPMENT,  
REVIEW, AND IMPLEMENTATION  
PROCEDURES**  
*Individual Courses Only*  
**(Includes distance education course  
and Independent Learning Course procedures)**

**Courses Selected for Distance Education.** Courses selected for distance education are departmental courses that are either part of an approved distance education credit degree program offered via departmental infrastructure for such courses or are individual credit courses selected by individual faculty members for offering through Auburn University's Independent Learning Program. Distance education courses serve predominantly an off-campus clientele.

**Redesign and Review.** As part of Auburn University's quality assurance process, courses intended for distribution via a distance education mode for the first time must be reconfigured for distance education delivery and reviewed by the appropriate academic groups. This guide provides information about the process of redesigning, reviewing and implementing distance education courses.

The Distance Learning Office provides consultation for course conversions and facilitates the review and approval processes. The office also works in a partnering relationship with Auburn faculty who choose to offer a course via the Independent Learning Program, which is managed by the Distance Learning Office.

## **I. Faculty Course Assignment**

- A) **Credit Degree Program Courses:** If the faculty member is to deliver a distance education course as part of an approved distance education degree program, the course assignment will be made by the department head.
- B) **Independent Learning Courses:** If a faculty member wishes to offer an individual course via the Independent Learning Program, the faculty member first consults with the course designer in the Distance Learning Office to obtain information concerning design options and course project commitments. Then the faculty member clears the intended project with the academic department head.

## **II. Course Redesign Considerations for Distance Education**

Once the faculty member has received the course assignment or approval to pursue an Independent Learning course project, the faculty member begins work on the course reconfiguration with the assistance of a distance learning specialist and other appropriate university staff as needed. Items considered in the reconfiguration of a course for distance education delivery for students away from campus include the following. This is not necessarily a linear thought process:

- A) **Complete, Detailed Syllabus:** Provide details regarding the course, its requirements, number of credit hours, offering schedule, learning objectives, texts and other required materials, assignments, examinations, grading process, and any other special options and requirements. Provide name of the faculty for the course and information related to all pedagogical modes expected to be used.

- B) **Target Population Demographics:** Provide information regarding the characteristics and expected number of enrollees of the population you expect to serve—who they are, where they are, what background they have, and what knowledge and technical skills you expect them to have in order to successfully complete this course.
- C) **Academic Resources:** Detail the types of academic resources that will be arranged for the support of this course at a distance. What library resources will be needed? What will students need to access this course, necessary resources and services that require special consideration and accommodation for students at a distance.
- D) **Delivery Systems:** Describe in detail the intended delivery system(s) and the rationale for selection--*i.e.*, the way in which the delivery system(s) will be integrated into an effective teaching and learning environment. Make specific reference to delivery of instruction and access to ancillary instructional support items or activities--library services, unique or critical academic resources and support, communication between students and faculty and among students. Provide locations and details of arrangements with service and facilities providers and include copies of written agreements or support letters.
- E) **Learning Environment/Approach Adjustments:** Indicate whether or not any accommodation to the normal instructional environment will be made for the distance education delivery mode. In other words, are there instructional techniques you use on campus that can not be duplicated in the distance education format, and if so, what will you do to achieve the same learning outcome? Provide an estimation of the impact of these changes (*i.e.*, if a lab, group project, or other special activity is an integral part of this course, what will be done to compensate for or to accommodate this requirement in the distance education offering that will assure the expected pedagogical outcome?)
- F) **Student Evaluation:** Provide details on student evaluation procedures. Make specific reference to the way in which students are typically evaluated in the campus classroom offering and the way in which evaluation of students will be conducted in the distance education mode. Show that this accommodation will have similar evaluation validity. Describe examination security procedures.
- G) **Course Logistics Support:** State whether this is a department-based distance education course offering or an Independent Learning Program course. Provide information on the way in which this course will receive logistics support by detailing the tasks to be done (materials duplication and dissemination, telecommunications scheduling, examination processing, financial management, marketing, student help, etc.) and who will do them.
- H) **Course Evaluation:** Detail your plan for evaluation of the course and assessment of course effectiveness. Indicate the way in which this process will be proactive-- *i.e.*, affecting the success and quality of the instructional and learning activity on a continuous basis.

### III. Financial Aspects

*(The following information is not considered in the academic review, but only in the review for the appropriateness of the proposed tuition rate. This section is omitted if this course is an Independent Learning Program offering or part of a previously-approved distance education program that had included an approved tuition rate)*

- A) **Course Budget:** Provide a *detailed* budget for this course. Budget detail will include the following considerations: personnel (support staff time as appropriate, site facilitators, faculty effort), hardware/software, telecommunications, printing, supplies, travel, postage, production and reception facilities, course materials, special academic resources including library support, marketing, evaluations and assessments, etc. Document authorization for these expenditures from the appropriate office. If grant funds are involved, detail the amount of funding available and its intended uses.
- B) **Establishing the Course Tuition Rate:** If there is no other policy in effect determining the tuition rate for this particular offering, then a tuition rate must be proposed based on expected credit hour production and course costs. The course must be self-supporting. A tuition rate for individual offerings (not part of an approved distance education degree program or an Independent Learning offering) shall follow the basic tuition-setting policies outlined in the *Distance Education Program and Tuition Proposal and Review Procedures* document, which is found in Section III of this document.

#### IV. Course Review and Approval Procedures

Department and School/College curriculum review shall be completed as required. Once the course re-design proposal is complete and approved within the department and school/college, the proposal must be submitted by the department head to the University Curriculum Committee and, if appropriate, the Graduate Council. The submission to Academic Affairs shall include a completed *Request to Add, Delete, Replace Course Form* (See attachment). Upon clearance by Academic Affairs, the course may be implemented. Note: If the course is an ad hoc offering (*i.e.*, not part of a previously approved distance education program or an Independent Learning offering), the special tuition rate for the course must be submitted for approval to the Associate Provost and Vice President for University Outreach after Academic Affairs' clearance and prior to implementation.

#### V. Course Activation

Once all approvals are granted, the course may be advertised and implemented.

Academic Affairs will place the reconfigured course into the course inventory according to a special numbering scheme:

*Note: Online, on-load, on-campus Internet-based courses will not use these distance education identifying end digits. They will be entered into the course system as regular campus courses, typically ending in a "0."*

##### **Undergraduate Courses**

**XXX3**

These are distance education courses, either synchronous or a-synchronous that are completed within the time frame of one semester by Auburn-admitted students. They abide by regular on-campus class grading policies and calendar. Example: *MKTG 3313–Principles of Marketing*.

##### **Independent Learning Program Courses (A-synchronous)**

**XXX4**

These courses are managed for departments through the Independent Learning Program

and students may enroll at any time and take up to 9 months to complete the course.  
Example: *ENTM 2044–Insects*.

## Graduate Distance Education Courses

XXX6

These courses are graduate level courses (must be completed within the time frame of one semester) offered either synchronously or a-synchronously.

## VI. The Independent Learning Program

- A) **Course Characteristics:** Independent Learning courses use a variety of delivery modes (print, audio/video cassette, CDs, WWW/Internet) to provide Auburn University courses taught by University faculty mainly for students off campus. Students may enroll at any time and take up to 9 months to complete a course for college credit. AU students may elect to complete a course within a semester so that the student's grade in the Independent Learning course will impact the Grade Point Average. Independent Learning courses do not include courses offered online for on-campus students via on load assignments for Auburn faculty.
- B) **Target Audience:** The primary audience for Independent Learning courses is non-traditional students who--due to job or family responsibilities--cannot attend a campus-based educational program. Additional audiences include Auburn students with scheduling problems, Auburn students away from campus for a term, adult students considering returning to college and who want to sample the work, students from other colleges who require a special course that they cannot find at their home institution, and individuals who wish to take a course for their own personal interest.
- C) **Role of the Distance Learning Office (DLOT):** The Distance Learning Office is a development and logistics support office for a variety of distance education programs and courses. The office promotes distance education to the university community; provides design, development, and implementation support; and aids the university and departments in adjustments to accommodate and refine distance education courses and programs. DLOT manages the Independent Learning Program and supports faculty in the design, development, and implementation of independent learning courses, provides logistics support to the faculty and students, markets the courses, evaluates the courses with the faculty and students, pays for course costs and remunerates faculty for their efforts.
- D) **Faculty:** Faculty who develop and offer independent learning courses are regular AU faculty or qualified adjuncts approved by the appropriate department head. An approved faculty member is always assigned to each offering, is responsible for the content and presentation of the course, and evaluates and directs the students enrolled in the course.
- E) **Course Development and Review:** The fundamental process is outlined in Section II of this document.

Joint Development Projects: When a faculty member and the department wish to offer an online course to a significant number of campus students and to off-campus students simultaneously, the department and DLOT will conduct a joint effort for development and implementation to serve these two audiences. Development costs will be shared.

Upon implementation, two separate sections of the course would be offered, an XXX0 section (faculty on-load assignment) for the department's on-campus offering and an XXX4 or XXX3 section (faculty off-load assignment per Independent Learning procedures) for the Independent Learning Program's offering for off-campus students. A variety of development and service provision situations can be negotiated between DLOT and the department/faculty.

- F) Course Materials:** Course materials vary with each course. Each course has a syllabus providing basic information to the student about the course and instructor supplied discussion material, and assignments. Other materials may include textbooks, handbooks, workbooks, video or audio cassettes, lab kits, computer disks, or Internet-accessible materials. Some courses require students to access local resources to facilitate learning. Library materials can be obtained in the student's locale or through the AU libraries. Once the course materials are approved, DLOT then duplicates the necessary materials, warehouses them, and distributes them to students as needed.
- G) Course Implementation/Operation:** Once the course is developed and approved, DLOT student services staff markets the course to interested students.

*Information Dissemination:* DLOT provides students with general information related to the Independent Learning Program, including policies, procedures, tuition and fees, and courses available. Students with questions regarding the mechanics of matriculating through an independent learning course are provided general advising by DLOT student services staff. Students who require information regarding academic programs are referred to the appropriate college academic advisor.

*Enrollment in Independent Learning Courses:* DLOT registers the students, collects course fees, and provides all necessary materials to the registered student. AU students who register for an Independent Learning Program course must pay the stated course fees and tuition to DLOT (Independent Learning is a self-supporting operation). AU students are limited to two independent learning courses per semester. AU students registering for a DLOT independent learning course first must have approval from their Dean's office (checked for program applicability, course load, enrollment status, etc.) AU students cannot enroll in an Independent Learning course if an on-campus section of the course is available. The minimum time allowed for completion of a course is 30 days; the maximum is nine months. An AU student may enroll for the new "graded" option which requires completion of the course within one term. The graded option allows course grades earned in independent learning courses to apply to the AU student's GPA (Grade Point Average).

*Assignment Handling:* DLOT facilitates the flow of assignments between students and faculty. Assignments are sent to DLOT, are logged in to the database, are forwarded to the faculty member, are received at DLOT after the faculty member grades them, are logged in the DLOT database, and then are returned to the student with the faculty member's comments and evaluation. This process continues until all assignments are completed satisfactorily. The DLOT database contains detailed information on the performance and the status of each student in an Independent Learning course.

*Examinations/Grades:* Once the student has satisfactorily completed all assignments, the student selects a proctor to supervise the final exam. DLOT approved proctors are academic administrators in the student's locale: school superintendent or principal, academic dean or department head at a college, another independent learning office test supervisor at a college, or an education officer at a military installation. Exams are

given under the same circumstances as they would be on campus. Once the proctored exam is over, the proctor collects the exam and written material, seals them in an envelope and immediately drops them in the mail. When the exam is received by DLOT, it is handled in the same method as an assignment. A final exam and course grade report is provided the faculty member. Copies of the completed form are distributed to the faculty member, the DLOT office, the registrar, and the student. Regardless of how well a student does on the course assignments, the student must pass the final exam in order to pass the course. Some students also include a midterm exam which must be taken under the same conditions as the final exam. (AU students take their exams in the Distance Learning Office's examination rooms in Petrie Annex)

FTE production is reported to the Office of Institutional Analysis and Planning and credited to the academic departments as appropriate.

- H) Independent Learning Financial Elements:** Independent Learning courses tuition and fees as established by the Board of Trustees (for Academic Year 2001-2002: \$87 per semester hour tuition; \$36 per course registration). Some courses have additional materials (tapes/lab kit) that require an additional fee similar to textbook costs.

Faculty are paid for developing a new independent learning course. Development stipends are as follows: \$1000—development of a 3-semester print-based course; \$1500—development of a 3-semester mixed media course or conversion of a print-based course to an Internet-based course (digital); \$2000—development of an Internet-based course. Additionally, faculty are paid \$75 per matriculated student in the typical 3-semester-hour course. Faculty receive prorated amounts for shorter courses and for students who complete only part of a course. Faculty receive pay on a calendar quarterly basis.

Course fees are collected and used to pay course development and implementation costs, faculty remuneration, and administration (staff/supplies).

## Academic Affairs Request to Add, Delete, Replace Course Form

**Prefix & Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Initial Term:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Select One:**

**New** \_\_\_\_\_ **Delete** \_\_\_\_\_ **Replacement Course** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**College/School:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dept:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Abbreviated Title:</b> _____ (32 spaces total)	
<p><b>CREDIT OFFERED</b></p> <p><b>Levels:</b> (select all that apply)  <input type="checkbox"/> None (blank)  <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate (U)  <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate (G)  <input type="checkbox"/> Professional (P)</p> <p><b>Maximum:</b> _____  <b>Minimum:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Connector:</b> (select one)  <input type="checkbox"/> Fixed (F)  <input type="checkbox"/> Variable (V)  <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate (A)  <input type="checkbox"/> To be Arranged (T)</p> <p><b>Maximum Repeat:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Session Duplicate:</b>          yes _____ no _____</p>	<p><b>CONTROLS</b></p> <p><b>Grading Rule:</b> (select one)  <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate (U)  <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate (G)</p> <p><b>Grading Type:</b> (select one)  <input type="checkbox"/> Normal Grading (Blank)  <input type="checkbox"/> Pass/Fail only (SU)  <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis/Dissertation (TD)</p> <p><b>Term Offered:</b> (select one)  <input type="checkbox"/> Not Specified (Blank)  <input type="checkbox"/> Fall Only (F)  <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Only (S)  <input type="checkbox"/> Summer Only (M)  <input type="checkbox"/> Fall, Spring (FS)  <input type="checkbox"/> Intersession (I)</p>
<b>Prerequisites</b> _____ _____ _____	
<b>Corequisites</b> _____ _____ _____	

<b>Description</b> _____ _____ _____
Credit will not be given for both _____ and _____

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Contact Group</b>	<b>Hours Individ</b>	<b>Credit</b>	<b>Max Enroll</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup>:</b> _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b> _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>3<sup>rd</sup>:</b> _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Justification</b> _____ _____				
<b>Additional resources or resource shifting required. If none, please explain.</b> _____ _____ _____				

Attach a copy of new syllabus to add course.  
 Attach a copy of current syllabus and new syllabus to change course.  
 No attachment required to delete course.

## Approvals

### Undergraduate Requests

_____	<u>Head</u>	_____
Department		Date
_____	<u>Chair</u>	_____
College/School Curriculum Committee		Date
_____	<u>Dean</u>	_____
College or School		Date
_____	<u>Chair</u>	_____
University Curriculum Committee		Date

### Graduate Requests

_____	<u>Head</u>	_____
Department		Date
_____	<u>Chair</u>	_____
College/School Curriculum Committee		Date
_____	<u>Dean</u>	_____
College or School		Date
_____	<u>Chair</u>	_____
Graduate Council		Date
_____	<u>Chair</u>	_____
University Curriculum Committee		Date

**PART III**

**DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM AND TUITION  
PROPOSAL  
AND  
REVIEW PROCEDURES**

Auburn University

*Approved by the Provost Council  
April 4, 2002*

# DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM PROPOSAL

## *For Degree and Certificate Programs*

**Note:** Use the following outline to provide information pertaining to your proposed program. Contact the Distance Learning Department for aid in developing your proposal.

### I. Program Overview

#### a) Program

Provide details regarding the program, its requirements, list of courses, number of credit hours, offering schedule, and any special options and requirements. Provide information related to primary and secondary pedagogical modes for each course in the program (*i.e.*, how are these courses taught?)

#### b) Program Approvals

State the requirements for approvals and outline the plan to accommodate these approval processes. Address ACHE and SACS requirements, approvals for other states (when physical presence is established), and discipline-based accreditation requirements.

#### c) Mission/Goals

State the way in which this distance education program is related to institutional mission and goals and directly to your academic department's purpose, mission and strategic plan.

#### d) Delivery Systems

Describe the intended delivery system (s) and the rationale for selection (*i.e.*, the way in which they will be integrated into an effective teaching and learning environment). Make specific reference to delivery of instruction and access to ancillary instructional support items or activities—library services, student services and support, communication between students and faculty and among students. Provide locations and details of arrangements with service and facilities providers and include copies of written agreements or support letters. What special technical delivery systems or facilities will need to be developed?

#### e) Academic Resources

Detail the types of academic resources that will be arranged for the support of this program at a distance. What library resources will be needed? What will students need to access courses, resources and services at a distance and describe the ways in which they will be provided.

#### f) Adjustments

Indicate whether or not any accommodation to the normal instructional environment will be made for the distance education delivery mode. Provide an estimation of the impact of these changes (*i.e.*, if a lab, group project, or other special activity is an

integral part of the residential offerings for this program, what will be done to compensate for or to accommodate this requirement in the distance education offering that will assure the expected pedagogical outcome?)

g) Student Evaluation

Provide details on student evaluation procedures. Make specific reference to the way in which students are typically evaluated in campus classroom offerings and the way in which evaluation of students will be conducted in the distance education mode. Show that this accommodation will have similar evaluation validity. Describe examination security procedures.

h) Program Review

Detail your plan for evaluation of courses and assessment of program effectiveness. Indicate the way in which this process will be proactive, i.e., affecting the success and quality of the activity on a continuous basis.

I) Cooperating Units

Detail cooperative relationships with other university units. Departments are encouraged to seek cooperative relationships with existing university units (Information Technology, Distance Learning, University Libraries, Student Affairs, etc.) for the development, implementation, and maintenance of this program.

## II. Target Population

a) Demographics

Provide information regarding the characteristics of the population you expect to serve—who they are, where they are, what background they have, what knowledge they possess, and what technical skills do you expect them to have in order to successfully matriculate this program.

b) Program Need

Describe the need that this program addresses and provide details and documents related to your assessment of this need. Explain why this need is not being met in any other way.

c) Program Demand

Detail your quantitative assessment of actual demand. As part of this task, information about similar extant programs is to be gathered and analyzed for potential impact on the proposed program. Determine a realistic forecast of the number of student credit hours to be produced over a full program cycle (*the number of years it would normally take a student to complete the entire program*).

### III. Faculty

#### a) Faculty Profile

Describe the faculty who will staff this program in regard to their expertise, experience and rank.

#### b) Faculty Involvement

Provide information regarding the faculty commitment to this new delivery option and their relative readiness to offer this program.

#### c) Development

What faculty development activities have taken place or are planned.

#### d) Support

Detail the nature and level of program development, delivery, and maintenance support to be provided the program faculty and indicate what unit will provide that support. (The Distance Learning Office offers logistics support for distance education programs which do not have a fully-developed support infrastructure)

#### e) Reward and Remuneration

Describe your plans for faculty reward and remuneration for participation in this program.

### IV. Administration

#### a) General

Provide information on the way in which this program will be supported administratively by detailing the tasks to be done (contracts, materials duplication and dissemination, telecommunications scheduling, financial management, marketing, etc.), who will do them, and estimate the impact these arrangements might have on other ongoing tasks.

#### b) Student Support

Describe the way in which student services will be provided (advising, registration, enrollment, course materials handling, examinations, problem handling, etc.)

### V. Financial Aspects

*(This information is not a part of the academic review process, but is required for a review of the proposed tuition rate)*

#### a) Budget

Provide a **detailed** budget for this program on a yearly basis for a full Program cycle.

Budget detail will include the following considerations: faculty development, personnel (program director, support staff, site facilitators, faculty effort), hardware/software, telecommunications, printing, supplies, travel, postage, production and reception facilities, equipment, course materials, special academic resources including library support, marketing, evaluations and assessments, etc. Consult with the Distance Learning Office to see if there are benefits to having that office provide some or all of the logistical support services. A modest contingency should be built into the estimated costs.

#### b) Tuition Rate

Each program must be self-supporting. Consequently, great care must be taken in establishing enrollment forecasts and in determining program costs. Using details from Items II.b., II.c., and V.a. above, determine a proposed tuition rate for this program. The tuition rate has two parts: the program costs portion and the University Fee.

*Program Costs Portion:* The program costs portion of the tuition rate is based upon program costs and realistic enrollment expectations. Divide the expected student credit hour production over a full cycle of the program into the estimated program costs for the same period. The result will be an expression of program costs per student credit hour. (This Program Costs Portion of the tuition fee will be returned to the offering department to cover program costs)

*University Fee:* The University fee (\$39 per semester hour in 2002-2003) is to be distributed to the General Fund (\$15.60/SemHr), The VP for University Outreach (\$15.60/SemHr), and to your Dean's office (\$7.80/SemHr) for a contingency fund.

*Establishing the Program Rate:* Add the program cost per student credit hour and the University Fee together to determine the tuition rate per semester hour for your program. This tuition rate will be expressed as a single per-semester-hour rate to your distance education students. No additional registration fee is used for distance education courses and programs. Fees for textbooks and other instructional materials may be expressed separately or included in the program costs calculations.

The maximum allowed tuition rate for distance education programs is \$560 per semester hour. Special, high cost, "executive" type programs are permitted tuition rates up to \$1568 per semester hour.

The University Fee raises each year by the same percentage as the University tuition rate increases and as approved by the Board of Trustees. The same is the situation for the program cost portion; however, implementation of the higher rate for the program cost portion is the prerogative of the managing department.

NOTE: If you are receiving contract or grant funds for this program include the details of funding: source, amount, purpose, expected use and impact on program finances.

## VI. Proposal Routing

Distance education program proposals are to be developed by the appropriate department or program head with the consultation of the Office of Distance Learning and Outreach Technology and only upon an indication of general interest/approval by the appropriate department head. Proposals are completed according to the outline

above and include the ***Routing and Authorization Sheet*** as a cover for the proposal (*See attached*). Once the program proposal is complete and signed by the Director of Distance Learning, the proposal must receive the signed approvals of the appropriate offering department head and Dean and any cooperating departments/Deans. Then the proposal is submitted to Academic Affairs for review by the University curriculum Committee and, if appropriate, the Graduate Council. (*Individual courses are to be reviewed later as they are re-designed for distance delivery.*) Upon clearance by Academic Affairs, the proposal is transmitted to the Vice President for University Outreach for review and recommendation to the Provost and President for final approval to initiate the program at the proposed tuition rate. (*See **Routing and Authorization Sheet** attached to this document. College of Education proposals require a special College of Education Routing Sheet in lieu of the attached*)

# DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM AND TUITION PROPOSAL

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*Title of Program*

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*Degree or Certificate to be Awarded*

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*Submitted by* \_\_\_\_\_ / *Department* \_\_\_\_\_ / *Date* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Reviewed by the Director of Distance Learning* \_\_\_\_\_ / *Date* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Reviewed by University SACS Accreditation Liaison Officer* \_\_\_\_\_ / *Date* \_\_\_\_\_

## AUTHORIZATIONS

- 1) Department Head: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) College Outreach Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
*Optional, Required by College of Education*
- 3) Learning Resources Center: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
*Optional, Required by College of Education*
- 4) Academic Review: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
*College/School Curriculum Committee*
- 5) Dean: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Academic Affairs: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
*Graduate Council (If Graduate Program)*  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
*University Curriculum Committee*
- 7) University Outreach \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Provost \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) President \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Distribution of final approvals:***

*Vice President of University Outreach, Director of Distance Learning,  
Program Head, Department Head, Dean, Bursar, Registrar*

# **ANNUAL REPORTING FORM**

## DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM FINANCIAL OVERVIEW (2002-2003)

Program title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Number of Admitted: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Students Graduated to Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

Category	Subcode Area	Description/Explanation	Amount
<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Instructional Faculty 1040</i>	<i>Development, Release Time, Stipends, teaching, course work</i>	
	<i>Professional Staff 1020, 1060</i>	<i>Administrative, Professional Support Staff</i>	
	<i>Staff 1080</i>	<i>Regular Support</i>	
	<i>Graduate Assistants 1100</i>	<i>Briefly--Where placed and how used?:</i>	
	<i>Wages 1400's</i>	<i>Miscellaneous Support</i>	
<i>Benefits</i>	<i>For all Employees 1500s</i>		
<i>Maintenance &amp; Operations</i>	<i>Program Operations 2000-9000</i>	<i>General office supplies and expenses, etc.</i>	
<b><i>Total expenditures for this distance education program this year</i></b>			

### REVENUE:

Total Program Tuition Revenue Share Received for this Program: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total Grant Funds Applied to this Distance Education Activity: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grant Funds Sources and Amounts: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following additional questions:

- 1) I estimate that we expended \$ \_\_\_\_\_ this past year on marketing the program.
- 2) Our reserve on hand is \_\_\_\_\_% of our expected yearly operating costs.
- 3) We **do/do not** (circle correct response) maintain separate expenditure and revenue accounts for our distance education program. (i.e., separate from other departmental financial operations)
- 4) I directed an estimated \$ \_\_\_\_\_ this past year to support Department/College infrastructure. (Give an idea of the use of these funds below)

***Please provide any other significant item of information for this year's operation on the reverse.***