

# **Building Library Support for Distance Learning Through Collaboration**

by

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## **Introduction**

Effective distance learning programs require the development and utilization of collaborative partnerships. This paper describes the collaborative partnership which contributed to the success of the Distance Education Program in the Department of Special Education at the University of Louisville and its impact on the development of a university-wide model for effective library instructional and support services for distance learning. Development of the distance education program and the collaborative partnership with Document Access and Delivery Services in the Ekstrom Library at the University of Louisville will be presented. A description of the methods used to provide library service to the students will be provided.

The Distance Education Program in the Department of Special Education at the University of Louisville (<http://www.louisville.edu/edu/edsp/distance/>) began as a collaborative partnership with Document Access and Delivery Services in the University Libraries, Television Services, Provost's Office, Admission's Office, Bookstore Services, and Information Technology at the University of Louisville. The distance education program was originally supported by the Provost's Office and Information Technology through a collaborative faculty incentive grant for the purpose of exploring new delivery systems for instructional programs. The Department of Special Education and Document Access and Delivery Services in Ekstrom Library were funded through the faculty incentive grant for the purpose of developing a distance education program and providing library services to participants enrolled in the program equitable to those available for on-campus students.

## **Distance Education Program**

In 1993, the Department of Special Education in Collaboration with Information Technology, University Television Services, and the Libraries' Document Access and Delivery Services began offering distance education courses via satellite and interactive television. Currently, the Department of Special Education offers over 22 courses per year via satellite, compressed video and the WWW. This includes a world class program

in teacher preparation in the area of Visual Impairment, leadership courses in Special Education, and course work in the areas of Learning Disabilities, Behavior Disorders, Mental Retardation, Assertive Technology, Autism, Transition, Parent Involvement, Classroom Management, Technology and Distance Learning.

The Distance Education Program in the Department of Special Education at the University of Louisville is committed to delivering progressive teacher preparation programs through advanced technology systems. This award winning Distance Education Program (1994, 1996, and 1997 United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) Telcon Awards) offers high-quality instruction through innovative delivery systems via satellite, compressed video, learning packets, CD technology, and the World Wide Web. Students are taught how to utilize e-mail and electronic library systems to conduct research and download full text of journal articles for literature review and analysis.

The teacher preparation program in the area of Visual Impairment reaches students throughout the nation and the world. Students are enrolled as a cohort group once a year. They attend a 3-day Institute at the beginning of the program to learn about distance learning, the WWW, library support, electronic communication and course content. After the Institute, the students spend the following year completing their course work and examinations via distance education.

The Department of Special Education, in collaboration with the University of Louisville's Child Evaluation Center in the Department Pediatrics, offers course work to professionals and parents interested in the field of autism. Courses are delivered via interactive and compressed video systems. Parents and professionals use the Kentucky Telelinking Network for consultation and instruction. Also, parents and professionals access information about autism via an electronic library system developed by the Department of Special Education and the Ekstrom Library at the University of Louisville.

The Department of Special Education is in the process of expanding its programs and courses offered via Distance Education. Extensive plans are being laid for the development of new degree programs in assistive technology and autism as well as for delivery of course work in the areas of language development, research, and leadership. The delivery of Doctoral and Post-Doctoral programs is being investigated, and use of the WWW and video on demand for future delivery of course work is being explored.

The preparation of teacher personnel in the field special education is changing rapidly, and there is a vast need for qualified special education personnel. In response to this need, the University of Louisville is preparing educators for the 21st century via Distance Learning.

### **Standards for Development of a Distance Education Course and Program**

In the early days of the distance learning program, standards were developed for the purposes of coordination and cooperation. Through collaboration, the success of the distance learning program was enhanced by the support of numerous units on the

University of Louisville campus. This wider support system provided immediate ownership for the program (Edge, D. et al., 1997). The entire campus has contributed to the success of the program.

The standards set for program development and support included:

- courses would be developed by the director of distance learning and the faculty member;
- courses would have a producer/director assigned from Television Services (if course delivery is via interactive television) or a webmaster from Information Technology (if the course is WWW-based course);
- courses would have full library support equitable to that provided for on campus students;
- printed materials developed by the faculty member would be produced by Information Technology Services;
- guidelines, course syllabus and program information would be provided via a distance education web page;
- printed materials and books for the course would be sold and shipped to the student by next-day air by the University Bookstore;
- enrollment assistance would be provided by the Advising Center in the School of Education, Admissions Office, and the Registrar's Office; financial support would be provided through a tuition recovery system.

Standards also were set for the development of each course. The collaborative team decided that each interactive television course would be delivered on a two-hour format containing multimedia production presented by the instructor, video roll-ins designed to teach a particular concept or skill, and time for interaction with students via telephone. Studio, telephone or satellite guests would also be included to enhance program content. Students would be required to contact the professor via e-mail, fax, or phone on a regular basis and within 24 hours of airing the course, the students would be expected to submit a one-page evaluation of the class to the professor. Each course packet would be timed on a 120-minute basis providing a specific run-down in advance of the class to the student.

The development of each course begins with the Director of Distance Education meeting with the faculty member to analyze the course content to determine library, television, multimedia, and printing needs. After the content of the course is compared with program content to determine that certification standards are met, a chart of the particular course needs is developed. A team, consisting of personnel from libraries, television production, multimedia, advising, bookstore services, admissions services and registrar services is assigned to develop the course. Members of this team, coordinated by the distance education program staff begin production. The development of a course normally takes around six (6) months.

### **Library Support for Distance Learning**

The University's first interactive distance education course was offered during the Spring 1993 semester with a full complement of electronic library services. During the Spring of 1992, the University of Louisville announced a Technology Incentive Grant Program. A faculty member in the Department of Special Education proposed the development of a live, interactive distance education course offered for academic credit via satellite and cable television with students participating interactively in the course via phone and/or computer from their homes or workplaces. Many of the distant students were not expected to be near a major popular center with a library capable of meeting their graduate level research needs. Because of a philosophy that library research is an essential component of quality education and a belief that distance learning courses should be of equal or superior quality to the same courses offered on campus, two librarians in the U of L Ekstrom Library developed a companion proposal designed to provide library service for the School of Education course. Rather than relying on reciprocal borrowing arrangements with other libraries to meet the needs of U of L distant students, the librarians proposed offering research support directly from the University library via electronic means. Both proposals were funded and reports were issued upon completion of the projects (Edge & Hughes, 1993; Edge & Sager, 1993).

The University of Louisville Libraries' Library Support for Distance Education Program (<http://www.louisville.edu/library/distance/>) has evolved as the Department of Special Education's distance learning program has expanded and as new programs in other disciplines have been added. In addition to offering individual academic credit courses, the Department of Special Education now offers over 22 courses, via satellite television supported by phone, fax, and the World Wide Web (WWW). The Library also, during the 1996-1997 academic year, supported graduate-level courses offered via compressed video by the University's Kent School of Social Work and is currently engaged in planning library services for courses in the College of Business Public Administration and in the Speed School of Engineering. As professors and students have migrated to the Web, librarians have, through electronic library request forms and other information resources available via the Libraries' home page, enhanced the information services available to distant students. Instructing students in information literacy skills needed for distance learning has also become an essential component of the University of Louisville's program of library support for distance learning.

### **Philosophy of the University of Louisville Program of Library Support for Distance Education**

One of the key components of the University of Louisville's program of library support for distance education is the integration of library services into the structure of the course via the professor's WWW home page and any printed course-related materials. A strong belief in the value of information literacy as a necessary component of any educational experience and as an integral element of lifelong learning was balanced against the concerns of professors about protecting their valuable class time for discipline-specific course content and the implications of the Report of the National Commission on Time and Learning (National Education Commission on Time and Learning, 1994). Students enrolled in colleges and universities today lead busy lives; they need quick and accurate

access to information. Workplace environments are becoming increasingly information-based, and educators must assist students in acquiring the information literacy skills needed to function in those environments (Edge, S.M., 1997).

The collaborative intent of these companion projects was to provide "one-stop shopping" for the student. The student must, of necessity, communicate with the professor. For many students, communication via the professor via the WWW was a new experience, and they had never accessed either their professor or library services remotely. The collaborators believe that the acquisition of information literacy skills is acquired in steps and that one must be able to crawl before one can walk. Therefore, the University of Louisville system was designed to enable the student to access library services using the same access mechanism used for contacting the professor. This enables the professor to focus valuable class session time on discipline-specific course content without having to allocate separate time for instruction in information literacy skills. The student learns how to access library services by following links on the professor's home page which are linked to the library support for distance education pages. As the students become more information literate through the use of resources accessible via the professor's home page, they are introduced to the broader world of information at their fingertips through links on the Library's pages. Some of the principles incorporated into the University of Louisville's Library Support for Distance Education Program are:

- centralization of access,
- immediacy of access,
- rapid turnaround time for remote delivery, and
- empowerment of students to access information and to perform their own research on a self-service basis.

### **Rationale for Development of Library Service for Distance Learning**

The U of L Library system is just one of many units that provide support for the School of Education's distance education courses. "The technologies that have expanded the delivery of distance education courses and the technologies for providing library resources are converging in ways that argue the need for strong, on-going partnerships between library and distance education programs" (York, 1993). "The technologies revolutionizing the delivery of distance education courses also are revolutionizing library services. The concept of the 'library without walls' is the logical complement to the 'classroom without walls'".

Additionally, "library service" is considered an integral aspect of the student's educational experience rather than merely as a "support" system. "Learning depends not only on classroom instruction and dialogue, but also on the student's ability to seek out and critically analyze information" (York, 1993). "Library services are not just another support service; they are a necessary component of any educational experience and an integral part of a lifelong learning process. As distance education degree programs

continue to grow and are influenced by technology, planning is essential to meet the information needs of students enrolled in these programs" (York, 1993).

Further, the collaborators were convinced that the parent institution receiving tuition payment should bear responsibility for providing support for its distance education programs rather than expecting other libraries in the student's community to assume this responsibility, especially when the materials needed by the student might not be readily available in the community library. The "Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services" developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries support this belief. "The parent institution is responsible for providing support which addresses the information needs of its extended campus programs. This support should provide library service to the extended campus community equitable with that provided to the on-campus community" (Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), 1998).

The collaborators also believe, that, because students engaged in distance learning are paying the same tuition as other students of the University, they are entitled to library service which is equitable with that provided to the on-campus community. "One of the challenges to distance learning programs is to foster library and information literacy among off-campus students and to provide library resources that will allow them equivalent access to materials and services as their on-campus counterparts" (York, 1993).

### **Overview of Library Services Provided**

Students enrolled in distance education courses at the University of Louisville can consult by e-mail, fax, or phone with library personnel and use their computers to search remote databases electronically to identify library materials relevant to their research topics. They can ask the Library to delivery journal articles to their home or workplace via fax and, soon, with the advent of a new campus e-mail system, as an e-mail attachment. In some cases, students can download the full text of articles directly into their personal computers. Books are delivered to the students' homes via first-class mail.

Additionally, distance education students benefit from remote access to the huge microfiche and microfilm collections housed in University of Louisville Libraries. In January 1995, the Ekstrom Library installed a digital microprinter that can be used to copy microformat items into digital format for transmission via fax or computer to students in distance education courses.

Through the "Selected Journal Articles for You Research" section of the professor's home page, students, upon entry of a user ID and password, can gain access to journal articles specified by the professor as "required readings."

In addition to delivering materials from its own collection, the University of Louisville Libraries also provides access via interlibrary loan to material held in other libraries and utilizes various commercial document delivery services and the Internet to deliver material via fax and electronically.

Most importantly, the Libraries are committed to an information literacy program designed to enhance the ability of distance education students to use appropriate technologies for retrieving, on a self-service basis, information needed for independent research and study.

### **Library Services Offered**

Three sets of services that embody the above principles are offered: Information Literacy, Reference Services, and Document Delivery Services.

#### *Information Literacy*

Learning depends not only on classroom instruction and dialogue but also on the student's ability to find and analyze information. The ultimate goal of the University of Louisville's library support for distance education program is to enhance students' ability to retrieve information needed for their course work (and for lifelong learning) on a self-service basis and to foster the belief that information literacy is a necessary component of any education experience and an integral element of lifelong learning. The challenge of the University of Louisville's Library Support for Distance Education Program is to foster library and information literacy among off-campus students engaged in distance learning.

Delivery of information literacy instruction to date has been primarily through one-on-one consultation and an approximately 20-page printed handout inserted in the professor's course notebook that is purchased by all students. The printed handout provides step-by-step instructions (with illustrations of computer screen captures) on how to connect to and use the professor's home page to gain access to library services needed for that particular professor's course. A toll-free phone number and telephone assistance is provided to students who have difficulty connecting or who, after gaining access still need assistance navigating the pages and using the passwords provided.

For the initial project, Library personnel, in conjunction with Instructional Television personnel, developed a short video which focused (in jargon-free language) on ways to identify books and journal articles on a topic and how to get specifically identified books or journal articles. The video quickly became out of date as technology changed; it is being replaced by a multimedia instructional module. This library-initiated, multimedia project developed with technical assistance from personnel in the University's Instructional Quality (IQE) Lab using Macromedia Director and other image, audio, and video software will be linked to the professors' home pages and serve as an introduction to other education resources and information links available via the web. The "Librarian Assistance" section of the page also includes links to tutorials on how to use the FirstSearch system for searching bibliographic databases and how to use a browser to conduct additional searches for educational resources on the web.

Librarians have also participated in televised instruction via satellite and compressed video. For courses in the School of Education, librarians have both taped video segments in advance and participated in live televised classes interacting with students via phone.

In the masters and Ph.D. programs offered via compressed video by the University's Kent School of Social Work, librarians have provided live televised instruction via videoconferencing links and responded to questions from students at the linked sites.

To further the integration of information literacy instruction into distance education programs, the University Libraries submitted a proposal in 1996 for the establishment of a videoconferencing facility in the Library. The proposed facility, designed to be staffed and maintained collaboratively with the Office of Information Technology, is intended to serve, until such time as the volume of use indicates a need for videoconferencing facility within the individual instructional unit, as a site in which instructional faculty can work with librarians and gain hands-on experience to guide decisions about how best to incorporate videoconferencing into their instruction. The videoconferencing facility in the Library is also anticipated to serve as a site from which librarians can rate both physical library materials available in the building and electronic resources available to students independently of time or place into their instruction.

The Directors of the eight State-Assisted Academic Libraries of Kentucky (SAALCK) are moving toward cooperative resource sharing and implementation of the Digital Library of Kentucky (State Assisted Academic Library Directors of Kentucky (SAALCK), 1997). The proposed videoconferencing in the University of Louisville Library would allow the SAALCK Library Directors (who also have videoconferencing facilities elsewhere on their campuses) to use personnel sources more effectively. By bringing the expertise of the respective SAALCK staffs together to plan in dispersed work groups, the teleconferencing approach could enhance dialogue and expedite action on several collaborative efforts needed to implement the Digital Library of Kentucky.

The Library Support for Distance Education Program wants to play a supportive role in those academic units with faculty members who demonstrate interest in integrating library components into their telelearning programs. Through teleconferencing, the Library can deliver instruction in methods of remotely accessing information in the University Libraries and from around the world to other sites equipped for videoconferencing.

In summary, the information literacy services provided for students and faculty engaged in distance education include:

- referral to Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in the student's geographical area code.
- a 15-20 page printed hand-out for each course which illustrates (with captures of computer screens) the exact steps for accessing a professor's home page and the library resources accessible therein.
- instruction to distance students (via television or compressed video or in-person when possible) in online catalog and Internet usage for retrieval of information.
- maintenance of a library-generated World Wide Web (WWW) distance education resource home page with links to other Internet sites relevant to the content of U of L distance education courses (<http://www.louisville.edu/library/distance>)

- provision of tutorials on web use and library research on the web page.
- maintenance of a collection of guidebooks and other resources for instruction in use of the Internet for distance learning.

Additionally, the following services are in process:

- Development of a brochure outlining the most essential library services for distance education.
- Replacement of a video tape on library services for distance students developed in Spring 1993 with a Director multimedia presentation including video clips which illustrate step-by-step procedures for accessing library services for distance education courses.

### *Reference*

The Reference goal of the Library Support for Distance Learning Program is to enable students at remote locations to identify resources on a topic of their choice. Reference services provided for students and faculty engaged in distance education include:

- provision of access to databases (Library of Congress, National Library of Medicine, and ERIC) for literature searches to determine books and journal articles relevant to course content:
  - 1) performed on a self-service basis by distance students with computer access
  - 2) performed with assistance of library personnel, occasionally, for any distance students temporarily without access to computers
- availability of a reference librarian via a toll-free number for consultation regarding research strategies.

A "Librarian Assistance" Section is included on the Library Support for Distance Education home page. One link associated with the "Librarian Assistance" page provides the option of sending a question directly to the reference librarian associated with distance education support.

Since most of the courses, at present, are in the education discipline, emphasis is placed on education resources. In addition to the inclusion of paper fliers on the use of the Educational Resources Information Clearinghouse (ERIC) products and services in paper mailings from the professor or the library, a link is provided to the Ask ERIC personalized Internet-based service providing education information through the United States and the world. When students submit education-related questions, within two business days they receive a personal e-mail response from one of the network information specialists which includes a list of citations and Internet resources related to

the topic. Links to additional education resources available via the web are also included under the "Librarian Assistance" section of the home page.

### *Document Delivery*

The University Libraries' Document Delivery Goal is to make specifically identified library materials available to students in the shortest possible time. The program is designed to enable distance education students to retrieve the full text of material online when possible. When full text is not available online on a self-service basis, the intent of the library support for distance education program is for the University of Louisville Libraries Document Access and Delivery Services staff to obtain the material from any place in the world and deliver it to students in their homes or workplaces.

The document delivery services offered include:

- access via the web-accessible OCLC FirstSearch system to selected databases (including some with full-text journal articles)
- access to required readings placed on course reserve by distance education professors
  - 1) provided electronically on a self-service basis for items available in full-text or scanned into machine-readable form
  - 2) delivered upon request via fax or mail for items not available in electronic format
- retrieval of books from University of Louisville Libraries' stacks (including charging and delivery of books to students homes via first-class mail),
- retrieval and photocopying of journal articles held in University of Louisville Libraries and delivery of the articles to students via mail or fax,
- retrieval of material in micro format held in Ekstrom Library (including digitizing of micro format text for delivery to students via fax or computer),
- retrieval from other libraries via the OCLC electronic interlibrary loan system of books not held in University of Louisville Libraries for delivery to the students/homes via first-class mail,
- retrieval via the Internet (i.e. via the Ariel document delivery system) of journal articles not held at U of L (including delivery of the articles to students' homes via fax or computer).

Additional Library Services for Distance Education Professors:

- assistance with the development of professors' individual World Wide Web (WWW) home pages (including scanning of professor-generated material into electronic format) (example: <http://www.louisville.edu/edu/edsp/distance/>);
- course reserve (including copyright compliance service for professors);
- hands-on instruction in the Collaborative Learning Center (an electronic classroom with 25 networked workstations with Internet access, a multimedia instructor's stations, and a state-of-the-art projection system' for professors of

- distance education courses (and for any of their on-site class sessions upon request);
- access (subsidized by the University Libraries) to UnCover Reveal - an electronic mail alert service which sends, weekly, (a) tables of contents from a list of up to 50 pre-selected journal titles and (b) lists of relevant journal articles generated as a result of previously established search strategies.

### *Submitting Requests*

Request forms are available electronically on the web via the distance education professor's home page. Paper copies of the book and journal request forms which can be used for faxing requests to the library are still included in the professor's course notebook; however, students are encouraged to use the web forms because, soon, the course notebook will also be made available entirely via the web. Request forms include notice of copyright compliance and a box to check indicating willingness to pay additional charges above the amount subsidized by the Libraries.

Because University of Louisville distance education students are encouraged to obtain their citations from the world of literature at-large using the databases provided, access to the University's online catalog (Minerva) is not emphasized. Distance education students are not expected to determine ownership of needed items by the libraries of the home institution granting course credit before submitting requests because library personnel are committed to delivering the material even it is not physically present on campus.

Distance education students are told that their library requests should be submitted well in advance of any deadlines because not all items requested will be immediately available on campus. They are told that while some material can be obtained from commercial suppliers within a few days, it may take 2-3 weeks to obtain material from other libraries and that some material may require more than a month to obtain depending on the source from which it must be acquired.

Requests are processed in the order received with no more than five requests processed per day per person. No rush charges are levied because all distance education requests are considered as rush in order to achieve equity of access.

### **Resources Required for Library Services for Distance Education**

#### *Technology Used*

For database access for distance education students, the librarians initially recommended use of two databases which would cover most of the titles available in North America - the Library of Congress database and the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database (since the first courses supported were in the School of Education). Web links are now provided to additional databases, including the National Library of Medicine's public database. As stated earlier, the University's own online catalog was not

included because the philosophy was to obtain material needed by distance education students regardless of the location of the material or the student. The student's research should not be constrained by the holdings of a particular library.

Subsequently, OCLC FirstSearch database access was provided primarily because of access to the full-text of journal articles available in its FastDoc database. School of Education Distance Education Faculty were interested in FirstSearch because it included the Education Index which was viewed as supplemental to ERIC. When it was first implemented as a text-based system, FirstSearch was perceived by the librarians as having an interface that could be used by users with little online search experience or no web access. The links in several other databases to the OCLC Interlibrary Loan service and FirstSearch's subsequent web interface were also attractive features. Originally, FirstSearch was utilized on a per-search basis. However, during Fall 1996, FirstSearch access to a selected set of databases was obtained on a subscription basis through a statewide consortium agreement.

Electronic Course Reserve was tested as an alternative for required readings during Summer 1997 utilizing materials already available electronically in full-text. In this model, which was continued in the Fall 1997 Semester, the professor locates articles of interest in the FirstSearch databases and e-mails them to the distance education webmaster. The webmaster links the articles to the distance education professor's home page under the "Selected Journal Articles for Your Research" section. In the interest of copyright compliance, students are required to enter a user ID and password to ensure access only by students of the University officially registered for the course.

For producing copies of materials held locally in the University of Louisville libraries, the staff use a regular photocopy machine, a scan/fax/copier, and a digital microprinter. The later two pieces of equipment can fax the digitized document to the user without having to print a paper copy for faxing. For access to material not held locally, the UnCover document delivery service is used as the first choice of commercial vendor because of the ability to fax the document with a 24-hour turnaround time. Material unavailable through UnCover is requested via the OCLC Interlibrary Loan service with requested delivery via the Internet using the Ariel document transmission system. With the advent of a new University e-mail system, it will be possible to attach documents received via Ariel to e-mail for delivery to distance students electronically.

### *Staffing*

Within the University of Louisville Libraries, there is no separately funded unit or program of Library Support for Distance Education. The Library Support for Distance Education Program has been offered as a collaborative, self-supporting project staffed by personnel in Document Access and Delivery Services complemented by the assistance of a reference librarian.

Staff and student assistance wages are recovered from the instructional programs they support. Librarian time is considered as extended professional development and

responsibility - with no additional compensation. Both the librarians originally involved in the project in the Fall 1992 continued the job responsibilities they had before becoming involved with distance education.

The distance education project was initially undertaken as a professional enrichment and collaborative activity by the two librarians involved. None of the professional administrative time or librarian time spent in direct information literacy instruction to distance students is charged back to the distance education program.

The classified library staff and student assistants who work on the distance education project are full-time employees of Document Access and Delivery who work the usual 37.5 hour classified staff work week. The staff and student time spent on distance education is in addition to the 37.5 hours per week worked for Document Access and Delivery Services. The individual responsible for Computer/Network Services in the library support for distance education program works one additional day (7.5 hours) per week at straight time pay for 2.5 hours and at time and a half pay for 5.0 hours. The classified staff person responsible for Document Delivery Services works an additional 2.5 hours per week at straight time and supervises the approximately 30 hours per week of student wages charged back to the distance education program. The number of student hours per week devoted to library support for distance education fluctuates based on the number of requests received.

#### *Fees Charged to Students*

In the interest of providing equitable service to distance education students, the same policies regarding fees for library services for students on campus are applied to distance education students. However, a few exceptions are made in order to ensure equity of access for distance education students.

The University of Louisville has libraries on both its central Belknap Campus and on the downtown Health Sciences Campus. Users of libraries on the University of Louisville's Belknap Campus are expected to retrieve material from central campus libraries on a self-service basis; however, for a fee, library personal will copy journal articles available in-house on the same campus. However, there is no charge for the delivery of library material from one campus to users on a different campus. In order to ensure equity of access for distance education students, no fees are assessed to distance students for retrieval of material owned in any of the campus libraries; but the labor costs involved in retrieving and copying material for distance education students are charged back to the academic unit of the respective Distance Education Program.

For on-campus users, The University of Louisville Libraries pays the first \$20.00 of the cost of obtaining material not held in the U of L Libraries' collections. Requesters are asked to indicate on the request form any portion of the cost over \$20.00 they will pay for an item. Any costs above the \$20.00 subsidized by the U of L Libraries and agreed to in advance by the requester are automatically billed to the requester's library account. Distance education students are notified of and, upon approval, billed for any charges

above \$20.00 per item. The \$20.00 library subsidy is not charged back to the School of Education Distance Education program since it is a service offered to all University students.

## **Assessment**

Many higher education accrediting agencies have begun to address the issue of adequacy of library support for academic degree and certificate programs offered electronically via distance education. In the U.S., for example, The Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges, in its Criteria for Accreditation, includes a specific section (5.1.7) on Library/Learning Resources for Distance Learning Activities (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1994). At the "Visions of the Future: Distance Learning for the 21st Century" conference, Logan provided some specific questions which should be asked to determine whether an institution is in compliance with the SACS criteria for providing library and other learning resources for distance learning programs (Logan, 1997). Refinements to the program will be made with these questions in mind.

The original library support for distance learning project described was a spontaneous collaborative effort which developed as the result of a long-standing librarian/instructional faculty relationship; however, the program was firmly grounded on the principles in the American Library Association, Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) "Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services" and in York's "Guide for Planning Library Integration into Distance Education Programs" (York, 1993).

It is important that library personnel know the program needs for distance education initiatives early in the faculty planning process to allow time to plan and budget appropriately for library support for the programs. The University Librarian has taken steps to insure that library representatives continue to be involved in planning efforts by other academic units for distance education programs in any format. At the University of Louisville, new distance education initiatives and the instructional faculty coordinators assigned to them are communicated by the Provost's Office to the Libraries, and library personnel request invitations to give presentations of available resources and services to the faculty coordinators of the programs. Through the University of Louisville Libraries' new Library Liaison Program initiated by the recently appointed University Librarian, librarians also stress the willingness of personnel in the Libraries' Distance Education Program to provide appropriate instructional development assistance with web pages for distance education faculty taking care to integrate information resources and offer information support services for faculty and students off-campus at a level similar to those expected by on-campus students and faculty. During the 1996-1997 academic year, the Library Support for Distance Learning Program offered support to the University's Kent School of Social Work for its joint masters and Ph.D. programs offered via compressed video in collaboration with two other Kentucky institutions of higher education. Library personnel at the University of Louisville are also engaged in planning with faculty regarding support for an extended campus program at the U.S. Army Base at

Fort Knox and for various overseas degree programs in Asia, Europe, and South America.

The University of Louisville's accrediting agency criteria state that "for distance learning activities, an institution must ensure the provision of and ready access to adequate library/learning resources and services to support the courses, programs and degrees offered." (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1998, Section 5.1.7). At the end of each semester since Spring 1993, all students enrolled in distance education courses at the University of Louisville have been surveyed by library personnel regarding the adequacy of services received through the Library Support for Distance Education Program. The survey has remained essentially the same over the nearly five-year period except for the addition of questions related to enhancement of library services to distant students. Retrospective analysis of both usage data and user feedback regarding the services provided in comparison with the costs involved should provide some interesting conclusions. The results of such an analysis are beyond the scope of this Paper, but could prove useful in attempts to define and measure the library's effect on educational outcomes, particularly in regard to information literacy competencies gained through library support for distance education programs.

Additionally, the Office of the University Provost at the University of Louisville requires that all academic units conduct an annual "audit" of service and outreach programs within their respective units in support of accreditation and in anticipation of the outcomes defined within the University's strategic planning document. The following information is required for the audit of the Library Support for Distance Education program: (1) purpose and consistency with institutional and unit purposes; (2) activities performed; (3) funding; (4) method of evaluation of program activities; and (5) evidence of program effectiveness.

## **Conclusion**

In the United States, the Education Council Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-62) established the National Education Commission on Time and Learning and called for a comprehensive review of the relationship between time and learning in the nation's schools. The Commission's report, *Prisoners of Time*, concluded that we in the U.S. have been asking the impossible of our students - that they learn as much as their foreign peers while spending only half as much time in core academic subjects. Although this report focused on the American public school system, it also states that "higher education needs to get involved (National Education Commission on Time and Learning, 1994). The report challenges academic institutions to use technology to transform learning by improving both the effectiveness of existing time and making more time available through self-guided instruction that personalizes learning.

Higher education is trying to cope in an environment of diminished resources, and higher education funding agencies are placing increasing emphasis on improving efficiency in higher education through increased cooperation among colleges and universities. Many states have turned to the concept of distance learning offered electronically through a

"virtual university" as one possible area of cooperation. Colleges and universities are beginning to use telecommunication technologies with increasing frequency to deliver degree programs to students who do not come to their campuses. Higher education institutions have always seemed committed to providing academic support services that students need to complete the work necessary for their degree programs on-campus. Those institutions serving students who do not come to the campus should still be obligated to provide access for off-campus students to the critical services needed for their research and study. Personnel in the University of Louisville's Ekstrom Library have collaborated with the Department of Special Education at the University of Louisville since 1992 to provide students enrolled in its distance learning program with electronic access to information resources.

In October 1996, Kentucky's Commission on Higher Education and Institutional Efficiency and Cooperation proposed the establishment of a Commonwealth University through which existing or new courses at Kentucky's state-assisted institutions of higher education would be offered electronically. The proposal adds that the electronic university should be accompanied by a Kentucky Electronic Library System. The State Assisted Academic Library Council of Kentucky (SAALCK) has already articulated its vision of a digital library network to be carried out in concert with the Kentucky Library Network and the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives. Personnel in the University of Louisville Libraries are eager to continue their collaboration with other Kentucky libraries on the development of the proposed Kentucky Electronic Library System. The proposal for Kentucky's Virtual University Library can be found at: <http://www.uky.edu/OtherOrgs/SAALCK/saalckvi.html>.

The University of Louisville Libraries has a five-year partnership with faculty in providing a full range of library services to students enrolled in credit courses and degree programs offered via distance learning. It is exciting to envision a state-wide system which will have as a major part of its mission the support of students and faculty engaged in distance education via both satellite and compressed video and, increasingly, via use of the Internet and World Wide Web as a networked learning environment. Why? Because, it is important to release distance learners from being prisoners of time and assist them in their race to acquire text needed to meet their immediate information and research needs. It is believed that in the process of using a system that integrates library access mechanisms into the professor's home page, students will begin to view library services and information literacy as an integral part of the lifelong learning process.

Those interested in the evolution of the University of Louisville's Library Support for Distance Education which was first described publicly in a presentation at the American Library Association's 1995 annual conference, can consult the report of the original Instructional Incentive Grant project on the web at: <http://www.louisville.edu/library/ekstrom/dads/about-us/report.html>. In 1996, a teleconference on the project was developed and delivered to the Kentucky Higher Education Computing Conference via satellite. A copy of a videotape of the teleconference is available via interlibrary loan from the University of Louisville's Ekstrom Library. "Bringing Us Closer," a description of the University of Louisville

School of Education's program which the Library program initially supported as its first project, can be found at: <http://www.louisville.edu/edu/edsp/distance/bringing.html>. "Education for the 21st Century" at: <http://www.louisville.edu/edu/edsp/distance/about-de/> describes how, in order to meet the vast need for qualified special education personnel, the University of Louisville is preparing educators for the 21st century via Distance Learning.

The library component of the University of Louisville's School of Education Distance Education Program has been a contributing factor to the recognition of its excellence. Effective collaboration between the Library personnel involved in the original incentive grant project and the School of Education's instructional faculty facilitated the degree of cooperation which, as the program evolved, resulted in integration of the Library's information literacy, reference, and document delivery services into the distance education professors' web pages. "One-stop" shopping on the professor's home page now enables access by distance education students to learning resources in a manner which is equitable (and in some respects, superior) to that offered to students in similar on-campus programs.

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