

# **NSHE 2009-2010 Distance Education Report**

**September 2010**

*Prepared by NSHE Distance Education Directors*

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## Acknowledgements

Numerous individuals contributed information for this report. NSHE Distance Education Directors prepared this report based on data from the NSHE taxonomy file. The Distance Education Directors from each institution are:

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## Executive Summary

This report focuses on distance education within the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) for the 2009-10 academic year and provides documentation of the substantial growth of distance education within all colleges and universities. Distance education is a field of continuous improvement and change, and NSHE institutions are constantly working to extend their offerings beyond their physical limits to meet the learning needs of students in Nevada. Without distance education many students, especially those living in Nevada's extensive rural areas and those with heavy work or family commitments, would not be able to pursue their higher education goals. From this report, one gains an understanding of significant developments throughout the state and at each institution.

The number of NSHE students enrolled in at least one distance education course increased from 5,798 in fall 2001 to 31,186 in fall 2009, an increase of 25,388 students or 438 percent.

The College of Southern Nevada (CSN) launched the CSN Online Campus. The CSN Online Campus will meet the needs of the "100 percent online learners" by providing all of the courses, programs, and services that are commonly provided to students attending traditional on-campus courses and programs.

In the past two years the Distance Education program at Western Nevada College (WNC) functioned without a full time Distance Education Coordinator. In the interim, staff from various areas within the college assumed additional duties in order to maintain the web education program. Web based enrollment at WNC increased by 32% in the past two years despite a moratorium on new online course development and limited faculty support. With the hiring of a new coordinator in the summer of 2010, new course development and faculty support functions are restored.

Building on the universal deployment of WebCampus, Nevada State College (NSC) continues to focus on Universal Deployment of Online Technologies, Student Learning with Technology Orientation and Support, Teaching with Technology Support and Training for Faculty, and the Teaching with Technology Lab. NSC developed a college-wide staff development program called Technology Fellows Institute that won the 2010 Blackboard Catalyst Award for best staff development program.

Truckee Meadows Community College's (TMCC) WebCollege is engaged in several projects designed to improve the overall quality, consistency, retention, and assessment of online students. Specific projects include Quality Matters for evaluation of the quality of online courses, multi-modal options for content delivery, CAEL recommendations/best practices to make online courses more adult learner friendly, iNtegrate and the seamless connection with the Learning Management System, a new student orientation for online classes, and a Fast Track Online Degree Program.

At the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), Independent Learning (IL) offers more than 200 course sections in 35 subject areas with 187 courses completely online. Editors and instructional designers work one-on-one with faculty to develop, deliver and maintain courses. IL also acts as a service center for students, providing electronic "welcome packets;" individualized support 7:00 a.m. to

7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday via phone or in-person and email 18 hours a day; on-campus tutoring plus new online tutoring for MATH 096; and arrangements for required supervised examinations across the globe for all courses.

This year, the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) Distance Education Office made significant progress assisting the institution in providing Nevadans quality education. Some highlights include a revised Mission Statement and Strategic Plan in alignment with UNLV's Mission Statement and Strategic Plan, creation of the Academic Success Center Online, creation of an online interactive learning object repository, enhanced campus collaborations with Distance Education, enhanced role of the Distance Education Advisory Committee, and the introduction of new learning technologies to support Distance Education.

Great Basin College's (GBC) distance education offerings currently account for over 62 percent of GBC's overall enrollment. Great Basin College's WebCampus continues to grow at an exceptional rate. The WebCampus has seen a 142 percent increase in FTE from Fall 2008 to Fall 2010.

Students increasingly demand and expect distance education offerings. In order to meet the rising demand, some important elements are being examined in a statewide coordinated effort: infrastructure, faculty development and support, student services, accessibility, and the policies that govern distance education.

## **Introduction and Background**

The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) has to constantly work to provide and extend educational opportunities to all of Nevada. With the rapid population growth experienced in Nevada, there is an increasing number of students eligible for and participating in some form of higher education. NSHE employs many successful programs to reach these students; one particularly successful method is distance education.

Simply defined, distance education is education delivered where the learner and instructor are separated in space and/or time (Saba, 2005). Institutions see distance education as a means of enrolling more students, broadening their student base, generating fee revenue, offering courses in niche markets, and meeting their regional commitments cost-effectively (Calvert, 2005). Distance education is one of the performance indicators set by the Board of Regents to measure an institution's effectiveness in delivering quality education to all students.

Distance education is specifically aimed at meeting two of the Board's master plan goals: 1) a student-focused system and 2) opportunity and accessible education for all. The planning target is: "expand distance education offerings so that, on average, all students will have participated in some technology-mediated instruction prior to graduation." A Nevada online directory of all distance education courses is available to all NSHE students to assure the greatest possible access to distance education by all students.

### *Data Source*

The distance education data include state-supported distance education course enrollment only, derived from the NSHE course taxonomy. Non-state supported course enrollment, such as self-supporting courses offered through continuing or adult education, is not included.

Student enrollments in NSHE courses are counted as state-supported Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) in all academic credit courses that can be used to fulfill the requirements of a degree or certificate and where student fee revenue is collected in support of the state operating fund. On the official enrollment reporting date of each term, institutions submit a file composed of individual student records, one record per student per course. Records are created for all students enrolled in at least one credit-bearing course that qualifies as state supported FTE. The total student FTE reported in the file equals the institution's official enrollment recorded for that term.

Distance education courses are identified in the course taxonomy using the following guidelines:

1. The instructor and the members of the class are physically separated, resulting in no contact in a traditional classroom setting.
2. The "at-a-distance" instruction is provided using technologies generally recognized as distance education technologies.
3. If a distance education course section is totally web-based, it is identified as distance education. Hybrid instruction, using various methods of instruction in addition to the traditional classroom, does not count as distance education.
4. Other than any required meetings for organizational purposes, and in some cases on-site labs or testing, there are no regularly scheduled class meetings with the instructor except in the case where the delivery of the distance education course is synchronous, for example, interactive video.
5. In some cases, a distance education section includes students in a traditional classroom while simultaneously providing the instruction to other students who are not in that classroom. In this instance, instruction in the traditional classroom does not qualify as distance education. However, the instruction received at a site other than the traditional classroom does qualify as distance education.

### *Delivery methods for distance education*

The two most prevalent technologies widely used throughout the NSHE are interactive video (IAV) and web-based courses. In an interactive video setting, students attend an IAV classroom and participate with the class via a two-way interactive audio/video television or a one-way video with two-way audio. IAV classrooms can be found in many locations throughout Nevada. In web-based courses, distance education courses are provided via electronically-delivered materials. Students interact mainly through web-based forum discussions and email.

The shift in delivery methods (from face-to-face to online) also signifies a shift in teaching methods. As the delivery of distance education moves from face-to-face courses using an objectivist, teacher-centered pedagogy to online and hybrid courses that utilize digital technologies, a new teaching pedagogy emerges. This new pedagogy emphasizes a constructivist, collaborative, and student-centered approach to teaching (Hiltz and Turoff, 2005). As faculty embrace this new pedagogy, the nature of the teaching profession is being transformed, creating a new generation of skilled faculty. The possession and utilization of digital technologies becomes one of the marketable skills that faculty will be increasingly be expected to demonstrate and master.

### *Comparison to national trends*

Developments in Nevada's distance education programs are consistent with national trends. Currently, nationally, more than four million students are enrolled in distance education classes and programs, and more than ninety percent of community colleges and more than seventy percent of colleges and universities offer online classes, programs and degrees. Online classes also represent the fastest growing educational segment. National surveys report a 9.7% increase for distance education programs in higher education versus a 1.5% increase for higher education overall (Sloan-C) and a 15% increase for distance education programs at community colleges (Instructional Technology Council).

Distance education programs focus on improving access to higher education. As this method of instructional delivery matures, it is a viable option for working adults, active duty military personnel, public safety (fire, police, EMT), and allied health professionals as well as for those in remote/rural areas, students with young children, traditional students seeking to maximize their class schedules, and those with accessibility needs.

## **NSHE Distance Education**

To better understand distance education in the NSHE, the focus of this report is on data for Fall 2009. Data and analyses are offered on enrollment and student demographics, demonstrating rapidly growing enrollment in distance education.

### *Enrollment*

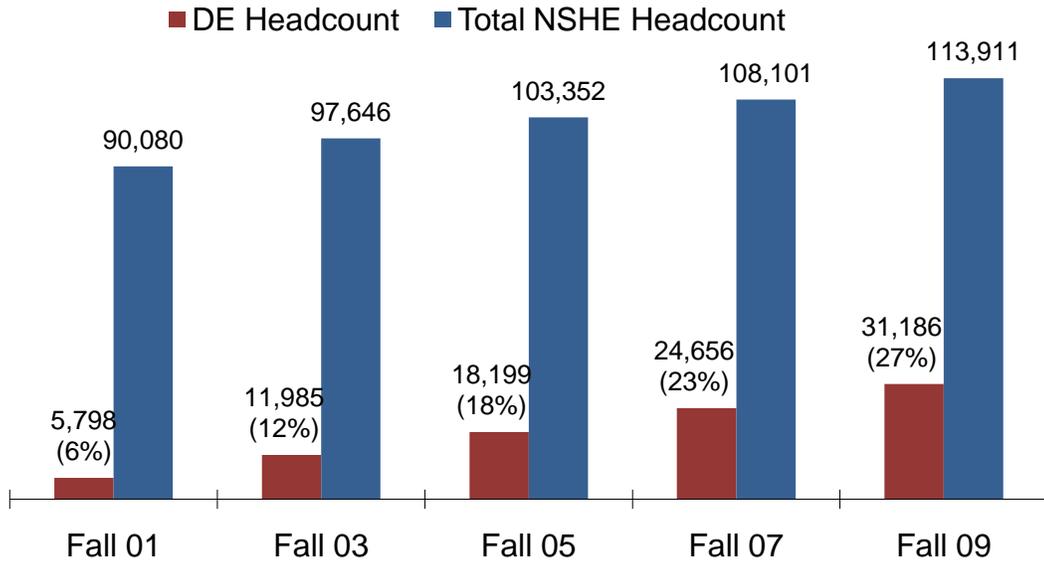
The accelerated growth of distance education is demonstrated through an examination of headcount. The *NSHE Annual Performance Indicators* include an overview of distance education, using the key indicator of growth in enrollment of students receiving instruction via distance education. The following chart displays the unduplicated headcount of students having participated in some form of distance education in the NSHE since Fall 2001. Again, headcount is defined as the total number of students (full-time and part-time) that participated in at least one distance education course.

**NSHE Annual Performance Indicators**

**Key Indicator:** Growth in enrollment of students receiving instruction via distance education.

Chart 1

**NSHE Enrollment in Distance Education Courses**

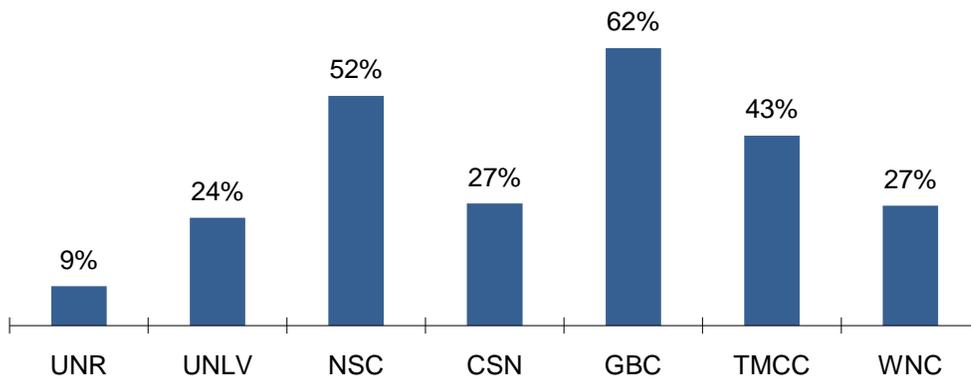


The number of students enrolled in at least one distance education course increased from 5,798 in Fall 2001 to 31,186 in Fall 2009, an increase of 25,388 students or 438 percent.

The chart below displays by institution the distance education unduplicated headcount as a percentage of total headcount.

Chart 2

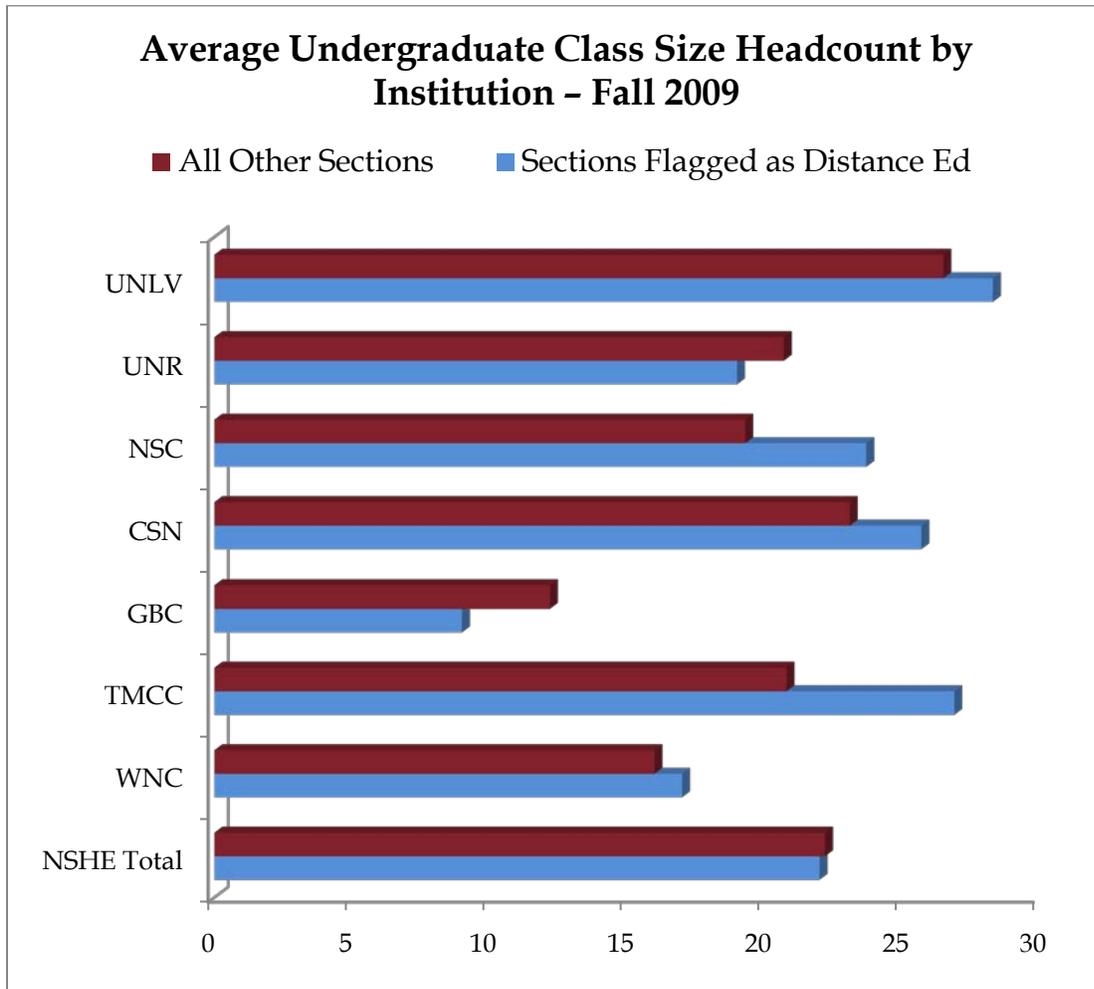
### Distance Education Headcount as a Percent of Total Headcount - Fall 2009



The larger percentage of distance education students at Nevada State College (NSC) and Great Basin College (GBC) demonstrates the value of distance education on two points: 1) utilization of current technologies to meet the needs of today's students (NSC) and 2) utilization of distance education to meet the needs of students across a wide geographic area (GBC).

The following chart demonstrates by institution the average class size of a distance education course.

Chart 3



The average number of students enrolled in a distance education course for the system is 22.0.

The following chart compares the successful completion rate of students in the general population to students in distance education. Successful completion rate is defined as a student receiving a grade of D or better for the course.

**NSHE Distance Education Performance Indicator**

**Sub Indicator:** Course completion rate of students enrolling in distance education

Table 1

**Course Completion Rates - Fall 2009**

|   | Sections Flagged as Distance Education | All Other Sections |
|---|--|--------------------|
| Percent of students completing a course with a grade of "D" or better | 70.7%                                  | 83.0%              |

Comparatively, students in the NSHE general population successfully complete their courses at a higher rate (83%) than students enrolled in distance education (70.7%). NSHE did see an increase in retention rates for distance education of 4% since the last report in 2008.

The following table demonstrates the current and future online degrees by institution.

Table 2

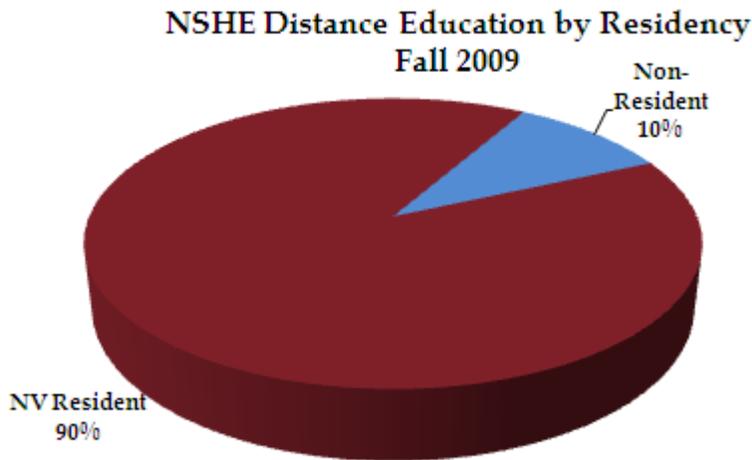
## Current and Future Online Degrees by Institution

| Institution       | Current Degrees | Certificate Programs | Planned Future Degrees |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| UNLV              | 10              | 5                    | 9                      |
| UNR               | 7               | 1                    | 0                      |
| NSC               | 1               | 0                    | 2                      |
| CSN               | 20              | 8                    | 3                      |
| GBC               | 5               | 0                    | 4                      |
| TMCC              | 11              | 0                    | 0                      |
| WNC               | 3               | 1                    | 0                      |
| <b>NSHE Total</b> | <b>57</b>       | <b>15</b>            | <b>18</b>              |

Source: NSHE Distance Education Directors

The ability to meet the increasing demand for online education is an important element to consider as the NSHE works to accomplish its mission of educating Nevada's citizens. NSHE institutions currently provide 57 online degrees and 15 certificate programs as an alternative means of achieving a college education. The above table identifies the number of existing online degrees, certificate programs, and the number of degrees planned for the near future. The future degrees will be operational by 2012. The range of subjects for the online offerings include areas of study such as a PhD in nursing education; master's degrees in hospitality administration and justice management; bachelor's degrees in social sciences, criminal justice, and education; and certificates in education administration, computing technology, and hotel, restaurant, and casino management. Beyond the independent offerings, NSHE institutions also collaborate to offer joint online degrees.

Chart 4



As the chart indicates, 90 percent of distance education enrollments are Nevada residents. This is consistent with previous reported data. It confirms that to date, distance education offerings have overwhelmingly targeted those NSHE primarily serves. The data also suggest both a risk and an opportunity for NSHE institutions. The risk is that online providers from outside of Nevada will seek to tap the strong online student base in the state. NSHE institutions work hard to improve access to higher education by offering online instruction, programs, and degrees. Coordinated NSHE marketing should emphasize the advantages of taking online classes, programs, and degrees from NSHE institutions to protect enrollment market share. Advantages include: NSHE experience in offering online curriculum and student support, instruction tailored for the needs of Nevadans, lower in-state fees, and the convenience of having the institutions nearby if needed.

The opportunity for NSHE institutions can also be found in a potential to market online classes, programs, and degrees beyond Nevada's borders. NSHE institutions have been offering online curriculum for more than 10 years; cumulatively, NSHE has an edge in both experience and curriculum development. Adoption of an entrepreneurial model could allow for a potential new revenue stream for Nevada's institutions.

Chart 5

**NSHE Distance Education by  
Undergraduate Full- and Part-time  
Enrollment  
Fall 2009**

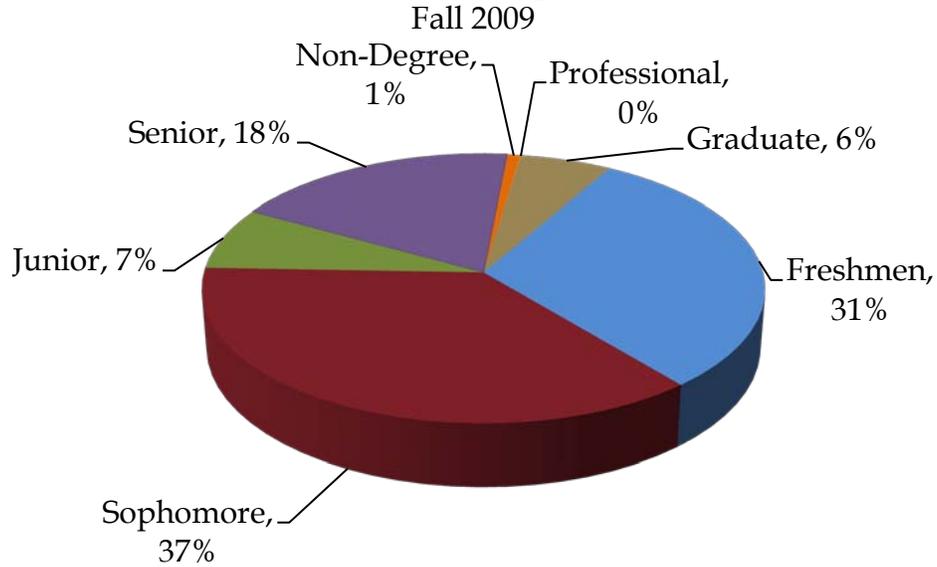
Full-time  
55%

Part-time  
45%

Data confirm a notable change from the last state DE report; in 2008, fifty-two percent of distance education enrollments were part-time students and forty-eight percent were full-time students. This year, fifty-five percent of the enrollments were full-time, indicating that online instruction has become “main-stream”. Many of Nevada’s students build their class schedules around both traditional and distance education classes to create the most practical and efficient schedule each term. Additionally, a higher percentage of distance education students are enrolled full-time compared to the NSHE general population, a fact which dispels any notion that the bulk of distance education students are part-time. In fact, the data would seem to confirm that distance education classes do indeed provide increased access to higher education – and offer a viable track to program/degree completion.

Chart 6

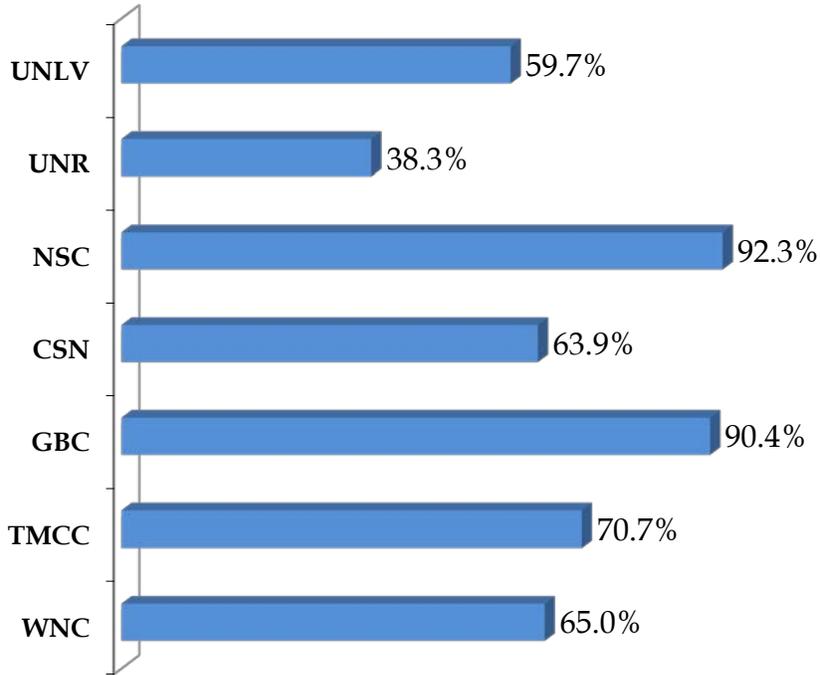
### NSHE Distance Education Enrollment by Class Standing



Patterns of student enrollment in distance education by class standing are consistent with the previous distance education report. The data also show that community colleges continue to be the most aggressive in offering distance education classes. There are a variety reasons for this, including: very large service areas for GBC and WNC, early entry into course offerings by high school students, especially online classes, and nature of community college students (significant work and family schedule conflicts). Currently, CSN and TMCC comprise more than 80% of the community college student enrollments in Nevada.

Chart 7

**Four-Year Institution Seniors and Community College Sophomores Taking a Distance Education Course at any Point During their Academic History  
Fall 2009**



Every campus reports a significant increase in distance education enrollments during a student's academic history. The four community colleges report a majority of their students take at least one distance education class, with TMCC and GBC each reporting that two-thirds of their students do so. NSC reports that nearly all of their students (92%) take at least one distance education class.

This supports the NSHE strategic goal that all students take at least one electronically-mediated class before graduating. It also demonstrates the widespread acceptance and utilization of distance education classes at NSHE institutions.

## Summary

The data presented in this report provide a composite of the typical distance education student in Nevada. The typical student is:

- 18-24 years of age ( although increasingly, older students [25-62 years of age] are also enrolling in distance education classes)
- Female (70% of overall enrollments)
- Enrolled full-time
- Enrolled at a community college

## Institutional Updates

### University of Nevada, Las Vegas

This past year, UNLV's Distance Education has made significant progress assisting the institution in providing Nevadans quality education. Some highlights include:

- **Mission statement and strategic plan.** In order to ensure alignment with UNLV's mission and to assist in efforts to this end, UNLV-DE recently revised the unit's mission statement and developed a strategic plan based on Harvard University's *Balanced Scorecard*. The plan is aggressive, measurable, and dynamic in nature.
- **Creating the *Academic Success Center Online*.** DE, in collaboration with the University's exemplary Academic Success Center (ASC), is creating an online dynamic service center for remote students to obtain the same services their peers receive on the physical campus. The ASC provides a full range of comprehensive services for students. Considerable empirical evidence indicates an increase in retention, completion, and achievement rates by students who access these services.  
<http://academicsuccess.unlv.edu/>
- **Online interactive learning object repository.** Studies suggest that interactive learning objects can increase the student's retention of complex concepts. In order to provide instructors a conceptual framework of multimedia interactive objects where students are engaged, assessed, and involved, UNLV-DE has created a repository of more than 500 interactives available for incorporation into instructional content. Instructors can also use the interactives as a model when working directly with DE staff in the creation of more specific learning methods within the context of their subject area.
- **Enhanced campus collaborations.** UNLV-DE is partnering with academic support units across the campus to eliminate redundancies, increase efficiencies, and provide new and innovative strategies in the development of our faculty members. Initiated as a charge from the Executive Vice President and Provost, The Consortium for Faculty Professional Opportunities (CFPO), of which DE is a member, is charged to coordinate,

collaborate, and share resources on institution-wide objectives related to education reform and the enhancement of teaching and learning. Members of CFPO are charged to work together to facilitate conversations, leverage resources, share expertise, seek opportunities, develop programming, and, in general, foster a faculty climate of innovation and support.

- **Enhanced role of DE Advisory Committee.** The Advisory Committee for UNLV-DE is now a more active participant and stakeholder of the unit's operations. The group, previously known as the Faculty Advisory Committee, was renamed to include a member of the Las Vegas community. The community member has several years of experience with curriculum and instruction, and serves on the board of a virtual high school in Nevada. During the Fall 2010 term, the unit seeks to include an undergraduate and graduate student. This will afford the unit a more comprehensive advisory group. The advisory committee is now more of a functioning work group, meeting on a regular basis to provide insight and review of processes and procedures.
- **New learning technologies.** Due to the closure of NSHE's streaming media vendor, Real Broadcast Networks, UNLV-DE has moved original video produced by DE to the current vendor. This opportunity afforded the unit to contract with Films Media Group in providing instructors and students more than 6,700 digital educational videos for the humanities and sciences. This change has resulted in students learning from some of the broadest and deepest range of educational video available. Access to the films is available across the institution regardless of instructional mode in collaboration with the Lied Library. Additionally, DE is piloting Wimba voice tools for consideration of implementation into the course management system. The recent acquisition of Elluminate and Wimba by Blackboard may result in additional savings for the NSHE consortium.

### **University of Nevada, Reno**

At the University of Nevada, Reno, two administrative units, Independent Learning and the Instructional Design Team, provide comprehensive support to the campus in the online teaching and learning environment.

Independent Learning (IL) offers more than 200 course sections in 35 subject areas with 187 courses completely online. Editors and instructional designers work one-on-one with faculty to develop, deliver and maintain courses. IL also acts as a service center for students, providing electronic "welcome packets," individualized support 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday via phone or in-person and email 18 hours a day, on-campus tutoring plus new online tutoring for MATH 096, and arrangements for required supervised examinations across the globe for all courses.

With faculty support from the Instructional Design Team (IDT), an additional 32 web-based courses plus over 1,000 web-enhanced course sections are offered through their academic departments. IDT offers face-to-face and online consultations and workshops for instructors throughout the year.

An innovative Course Makeover Program provides detailed pedagogical advice and feedback on selected courses from a team of peers, professional Instructional Designers and students.

Highlights of the program include:

- Independent Learning enrollments in January 2010 increased by 33 percent from the previous year.
- In 2009, UNR was awarded the Blackboard Catalyst Award for Exemplary Courses for Women's Studies 453, Gender and Society, Rosemary Dixon, instructor. In 2010, a second UNR course was awarded this prestigious honor: Social Work 466, Disability: Social and Health Issues, Judy Hammock, instructor. Both of these courses went through the Course Makeover Program and are an example of how Independent Learning, the Instructional Design Team and faculty are working together at UNR to produce exemplary courses.
- New technologies are being employed to replace interactive video. Echo 360 records lectures which are then archived for access by off-campus students a couple of hours later through WebCampus. Wimba Live Classroom (also accessed through WebCampus) enables a course to be taught live and fully interactive simultaneously to on-campus students and across the U.S. and beyond.
- The 2007–2008 Distance Education Report identified the need for UNR to offer complete graduate degrees online. The following are now available: M.Ed. in Equity and Diversity in Educational Settings, M.Ed. in Literacy Studies, M.Ed. with Educational Psychology emphasis, M.S. with emphasis in Information Technology in Education, M.A. in Behavior Analytic Psychology, M.J.M. in Justice Management, and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) in collaboration with UNLV.

### **Nevada State College**

*Universal Deployment of Online Technologies.* Nevada State College continues to support all courses, regardless of delivery mode, with WebCampus, a platform based on the Blackboard Vista 8.04 course management system. It is currently integrated with Wimba Live and Voice collaboration, SafeAssign plagiarism detection, Smarthinking online tutoring, StudyMate CS glossary builder, and other learning tools. To give students easy access to essential course materials and communication tools available to all members of the College community, WebCampus course shells are based on mandated NSC templates. Each WebCampus template contains links to Library/Research Resources, Student Services, and Tutoring Links as well as degree program links.

Planned enhancements to WebCampus will integrate CoursEval, an online course evaluation tool, and Bb Connect, a multi-channel communication system for notifying students of critical College admissions and enrollment deadlines via mail, phone, email, and SMS communications.

*Student Learning with Technology Orientation and Support.* Building on the universal deployment of WebCampus, all students admitted to NSC are enrolled automatically in an online course called *Student WebCampus Orientation*. The course includes all of the WebCampus learning tools with related learning exercises. In addition, every WebCampus course contains a mini-orientation called

*WebCampus Tour.* Students also have access to 24/7 telephone and online user support for WebCampus and related technologies, such as e-mail and MS Office Suite applications.

*Teaching with Technology Support and Training for Faculty.* Instructional support and training initiatives are essential to effective teaching and learning. Nevada State College's Office of Instructional Technology (InTech) continues to invest personnel and resources in the development of 1) comprehensive, fully online "teaching with technology" workshops, and 2) real-time instructional resources, available "any-time/any-where," making course design and development resources available wherever and whenever faculty need them.

With their first teaching assignment, full- and part-time instructors are enrolled in NSC's *Faculty Resource Center (FRC)*. The *FRC* provides 24/7 access to animated demos, manuals, and tip sheets for all of the teaching technologies used at NSC. In addition, instructors have access to a moderated Faculty Lounge where they can post questions and exchange teaching tips with colleagues.

To respond to staff interest in developing and sharing online resources as well as learning new technologies, InTech and the Provost's Office developed an award winning College-wide staff development program called *Technology Fellows Institute*. It promotes excellence and innovation in developing online instructional and student services resources using available learning and training technologies. The program won the 2010 Blackboard Catalyst Award for best staff development program. It uses print as well as online media to engage faculty and staff in an intense 6-week course that addresses both andragogy and technology issues in designing effective instructional, student service, or professional development resources. NSC has been invited to present on the program at the 2010 WCET conference in La Jolla, California.

Finally, in collaboration with Southwest Blackboard Users Group (25 schools and 92 members from Arizona, California, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah), Nevada State College is the host school for the 2010 Southwest Technology Showcase on November 3-5, 2010. The Showcase will feature two keynote speakers, 20 presentations, 15 exhibitors, and a juried competition to recognize with prizes the most innovative uses of educational technology for instruction, student services, and professional development in the Southwest. This initiative advances NSC's role as a regional center for the advancement of technology in higher education.

*Teaching with Technology Lab (TTL).* Nevada State College is proud to announce the installation of a technology training and development lab for faculty, staff, and students. The 9-station lab will provide private as well as collaborative learning spaces for all members of the NSC community in pursuing innovative ways to use online technologies to teach and learn. The TTL will also provide a space for demonstrating the latest developments in course design, media delivery, and lecture capture techniques. Faculty, staff, and students at NSC now have a space to explore available and new technologies and find innovative ways to adopt them for teaching, learning, and professional development.

### **College of Southern Nevada**

The College of Southern Nevada launched the Online Campus with the implementation of Angel as its new Learning Management System on December 15, 2008. The CSN Online Campus will meet

the needs of the 100% online learners by providing all of the courses, programs, and services that are commonly provided to students attending traditional on campus courses and programs. The CSN Online Campus has twenty Associate Degrees, seven Certificates of Achievement, one Certificate of Completion, and the junior and senior years of the Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene completely online.

In support of the mission of the College of Southern Nevada, the CSN Online Campus provides access to a quality, comprehensive teaching and learning experience by offering innovative educational programs, services and lifelong learning opportunities for a diverse population. The CSN Online Campus was named specifically to illustrate that choosing an online education at CSN is just like choosing to take classes at one of the existing campuses. It is of the utmost importance to the CSN faculty and staff that all of the values and academic quality associated with CSN will be maintained with the Online Campus. The Strategic Plan for the CSN Online Campus describes CSN's direction for its Online Campus through the adoption of five goals that are designed to move the institution toward its future vision:

- Goal 1: Create a stable and effective organizational structure that defines roles, responsibilities, accountability, and clearly supports increased communications.
- Goal 2: Actively pursue funding to support the CSN Online Campus.
- Goal 3: Continue to systematically improve existing technological infrastructure and plan for future needs.
- Goal 4: Provide increased access to courses and services for an expanded student population to reach their personal and academic goals.
- Goal 5: Achieve national prominence for our academic quality and innovative programs and student support services.

CSN has implemented the following initiatives to support the Online Campus:

1. **Student Online Learning Experience** – this is a self-paced course inside of the Angel Learning Management System that provides students with the opportunity to learn how to be an effective online student and introduces students to Angel.

Modules include:

- Introduction to Online Learning
- Navigation and Content
- Online Communication
- Online Assessment

2. **Faculty Online Teaching Experience** – this is a self-paced course inside of Angel that provides faculty with the opportunity to learn best practices in online teaching and the Angel Learning Management System.

Modules include:

- Online Learning and Teaching
- Navigation and Content
- Communicating Online

- Online Assessment
  - Gradebook and the Learning Object Repository
  - Copying Course Content
3. **Angel Online Tutorials for Faculty and Students** – CSN has created tutorials that are located on the CSN Online Campus website and within the Angel resources that will provide step-by-step guides to functions in the Angel LMS. These tutorials were developed based around the top 5 issues for faculty and the top 5 issues for students so that CSN can better serve the needs of both faculty and students.
  4. **Angel Training** – The Office of eLearning provide numerous training sessions and open Angel Lab sessions. Angel sessions will include: Angel and Blackboard – The Myth/Mystery, Angel Navigation, Content Creation and the Learning Object Repository, Communication (beyond Discussions), Discussion Forums, Assessment, Grading and Gradebook, EPortfolio, and Open Labs for Angel Q & A.
  5. **Smarthinking 24/7 Tutoring** - CSN is continuing our partnership with Smarthinking to offer free academic support to all CSN students. SMARTHINKING has the online tutoring, online writing services, and homework help services that help students succeed. Tutors are available up to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in a variety of subjects.
  6. **Course Information Website** – CSN developed a website that allows all faculty, both on campus and online, to enter important information about their courses to include syllabus, textbook, any special requirements, and faculty contact information.
  7. **Online Faculty Mentoring Web presence** – CSN developed an Online Faculty Mentoring web presence that allow faculty teaching online to connect with expert faculty for assistance and guidance.
  8. **Online Student Services Project** – CSN had an audit conducted of ten crucial online student services and has developed more comprehensive and interactive student services based on the audit recommendations in an effort to better support students at a distance.
  9. **ANGEL FAQ** – CSN has online support FAQ for instructors and students in the use of Angel.

### **Great Basin College**

Great Basin College offers many distance education courses for those who are unable to enroll in traditional, face-to-face classes due to work, family, location, or any other reason. Distance education is generally defined as a course that is time and/or distance independent, meaning that

the students and instructor don't meet at the same time or even in the same place. Generally, students do most of their coursework at home or office, at a time of the day or night that fits their schedule. Distance education courses may be delivered in a variety of methods including Interactive Video, Internet, Internet Enhanced, and LiveNet.

**Interactive video (IAV)** courses broadcast allow students in two or more locations to interact over live television with a single instructor from another location.

**Internet (WebCampus)** courses are the most popular type of distance education and are often referred to as asynchronous, meaning that students and faculty don't have to be on the Internet at the same time. Internet courses require students to use a computer with Internet access to retrieve and send their coursework to the instructor. Students are expected to do most of their work on a computer and to communicate with faculty and other students through the computer.

**Internet-Enhanced** courses use an Internet-based classroom to do all or some of the following: exchange or "hand in" documents, take tests, and communicate with the instructor and other students. Students must have access to Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher or Netscape 7.0 or higher. Students may use computers at home, any GBC campus computer, or a local library to access Internet course material.

**LiveNet** courses feature instructors and students meeting through the Internet at a specific time for course discussions using a microphone headset. Students may participate in course discussion on their computer at home or from a Great Basin College computer lab. A 56K or higher Internet connection is required, DSL or cable modem is high recommended. Distance education courses at GBC follow the same course outline, have the same learning outcomes, and require the same academic rigor as traditional face-to-face courses. They are a means of accessing college courses for those who would not otherwise be able to due to the remoteness of their home or work/family schedule. However, they are not for everyone. Some people dislike the lack of social interaction with other students, or lack the self-discipline to set a schedule and work on their own.

Over the past year, GBC has installed three new IAV classrooms and two videoconference rooms on the Elko and regional campuses, bringing the total number of GBC IAV capable rooms at all campuses to 46. In addition, GBC delivers classes to an additional 13 satellite centers, high schools, or other higher education campuses regionally and statewide.

Since the 2006-2007 academic year, Great Basin College's use of interactive video increased by over 5.5%, in total number of credit classes. For the past two years, all of GBC's credit classes delivered via IAV have been internet (Web Campus) enhanced with 6-10 classes delivered as hybrid IAV/online classes each semester. Each semester, GBC works with System Computing Services in the scheduling of over 100 interactive video classes.

GBC also makes extensive use of videoconferencing for Telecounseling, for meetings related to the Integrate project, and for interactive advising.

2006-2007

|                                 |                           |       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-------|
| IAV utilization (FY 2006-2007): | Total number of sessions: | 4,188 |
|                                 | Total number of Hours:    | 7,703 |
| 2007-2008                       |                           |       |
| IAV utilization (FY 2007-2008): | Total number of sessions: | 4,657 |
|                                 | Total number of Hours:    | 8,424 |
| 2008-2009                       |                           |       |
| IAV utilization (FY 2008-2009): | Total number of sessions: | 4,302 |
|                                 | Total number of Hours:    | 7,943 |
| 2009-2010                       |                           |       |
| IAV utilization (FY 2008-2009): | Total number of sessions: | 4,453 |
|                                 | Total number of Hours:    | 7,820 |

### **Truckee Meadows Community College**

The TMCC WebCollege has been engaged in several projects designed to improve the overall quality, consistency, retention, and assessment of online classes. Specific projects include:

- Quality Matters – this is a nationally recognized set of standards for the design of an online class. TMCC has joined Quality Matters and has been exploring elements of the rubric and its appropriate fit.
- Multi-modal options for content delivery – recognizing that online learning should not be static or text-only, TMCC has been exploring various instructional technologies designed to improve the delivery of course content. TMCC has joined a consortium of college and university campuses working with Carnegie-Mellon on the Panopto project. This offers a free environment that blends video, audio, and documents and/or websites in a single presentation. The content is easily digitized and can make certain ADA needs easier to achieve.
- CAEL – a national organization devoted to adult learners, the TMCC WebCollege intends to incorporate CAEL recommendations/best practices designed to make the online learning environment more adult-learning friendly.

- iNtegrate – seamless connectivity with the Learning Management System – TMCC has been a lead institution in the migration to the new student information system (Peoplesoft). TMCC is developing the solutions to allow for a nearly “live” interface between the campus Learning Management System (Angel Learning) and Peoplesoft. This will eliminate a significant frustration for students over the old SIS.
- New student orientation for online classes – research on poor student retention for online classes has identified unprepared students as a major factor. The TMCC WebCollege has developed a new student orientation – delivered online – for students to review prior to taking their first online class. Initial indications confirm greater student success, so TMCC is working to determine a way to make the new student orientation for online classes mandatory.
- Fast-track Online Degree program – TMCC has received a \$600,000 earmark to develop and launch a fast-track online degree program beginning with the 2011 spring term. Initially, AA degrees in business and criminal justice will be offered. TMCC is partnering with Nevada State College to offer a fast-track online four-year solution as well.
- Fully-online students – Eighteen percent of TMCC’s students only take online classes. An increasing number of students are degree seekers – and completers – confirming the value of online classes in promoting increased student access and degree completion.

### Western Nevada College

In the past two years the Distance Education program at WNC has been functioning without a full time Distance Education Coordinator. With budget restrictions due to current economic environment, the position was left unfilled after the former coordinator retired in 2008. In the interim, staff from various areas within the college has assumed extra duties in order to maintain the web education program. Web-based enrollment at Western increased by 32% in the past two years despite a moratorium on new online course development and limited faculty support. With the hiring of a new coordinator in the summer of 2010, new course development and faculty support functions have been restored.

## References

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Hiltz, S. and Turoff, M. (2005). The evolution of online learning and the revolution in higher education. *Communication of the ACM*. 48(10) 59-64.

Saba, Farhad. (August, 2005). Critical issues in distance education: a report from the United States. *Distance Education*.26(2), 255-272.

## Appendix

Board of Regents' *Handbook* Title 4, Chapter 14 Section 11.

### **Section 11. Distance Education**

The term "distance education" means a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction occurs when the student and instructor are separated by geographic distance or time. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education may employ correspondence study, audio, video, or other electronically mediated technologies.

NSHE credit and noncredit courses may be offered through the use of distance education technologies. The following guidelines shall be used to assure academic quality for distance education courses offered for academic credit applicable toward a certificate or degree:

1. In accordance with the appropriate standards for institutional accreditation, the quality of distance education courses must be equal to or exceed that of on-campus courses. Distance education courses are subject to all applicable institutional policies and procedures to ensure quality.
2. Faculty members assigned to distance education courses may be provided with incentives, as deemed appropriate by the institution.
3. Each NSHE institution will be expected to provide appropriate instructional support to ensure quality of its distance education course offerings.
4. Each distance education course shall promote and exhibit current best practices and procedures for distance learning. This involves pedagogy, design, and delivery, including but not limited to adequate provisions for instructor training, instructor-student communication, assessment, and equivalent access to all appropriate student services that are available to on-campus students, including such services as academic advising, counseling, library and other learning resources, tutoring services, and financial aid.
5. Each distance education course must provide the opportunity for timely interaction between the student and the instructor, or a member of the instructional team responsible for the course, regarding the student's progress. This may include (1) an orientation session or sessions at the beginning of the course; (2) periodically scheduled guidance or tutoring sessions during the semester either on an individual basis or in a group setting; and (3) provision for access by the student for advice or consultation with the faculty member. These interactions may occur either as traditional face-to-face sessions or may be assisted through technology.
6. Distance education materials produced outside or within the institution must be evaluated and selected in accordance with standard instructional procedures for course development and instruction.

## 7. Campus Service Areas:

Geographic service areas are appropriate for interactive video when designating the institution with responsibility for 1.) Establishing and maintaining interactive video sites in an area and 2.) Coordinating the receipt of programs using interactive video with offering institutions. Geographic service areas do not apply to web-based instruction. If an agreement is entered into by two or more NSHE institutions for delivery into the host institution's campus service area, these restrictions do not apply.

College of Southern Nevada: Clark, Lincoln, and Esmeralda counties. CSN and GBC serve Nye County.

Great Basin College: Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander and White Pine counties. CSN and GBC serve Nye County.

Truckee Meadows Community College: The greater urban area of Reno-Sparks, and Incline Village.

Western Nevada College: Storey, Carson City, Douglas, Lyon, Churchill, Pershing and Mineral counties and the rural areas of Washoe County, with the exception of Incline Village.

Nevada State College, Henderson: The southern portion of the state including Clark and Lincoln counties. UNLV, NSCH and UNR serve Esmeralda, Nye and White Pine counties. Within Nye and White Pine counties, UNLV, NSCH, and UNR serve Tonopah and Ely, with NSCH and UNLV serving all parts south of a line joining the two cities.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas: The southern portion of the state including Clark and Lincoln counties. UNLV, NSCH and UNR serve Esmeralda, Nye and White Pine counties. Within Nye and White Pine counties, UNLV, NSCH, and UNR serve Tonopah and Ely, with UNLV and NSCH serving all parts south of a line joining the two cities.

University of Nevada, Reno: The northern portion of the state including Washoe, Douglas, Carson City, Storey, Lyon, Humboldt, Pershing, Churchill, Mineral, Elko, Lander, Eureka. UNLV, NSCH and UNR serve Esmeralda, Nye and White Pine counties. Within Nye and White Pine counties, UNLV, NSCH, and UNR serve Tonopah and Ely, with UNR serving all parts north of a line joining the two cities.

8. The institution offering a distance education course will receive the student FTE's enrolled in the course. If the course incurs costs to partner institutions (*e.g., marketing, registration, technology support*), a "sharing protocol" should be completed prior to the course being offered to identify costs that must be reimbursed among parties.
9. Each campus will establish a protocol for determining costs or services to be paid by each partner when courses or programs are shared among institutions. The protocol will include, but not be limited to, sharing of special student fees, payment of facilitators and other services, responsibilities for marketing the course and recruiting students, advising, and

other support. The protocol will be updated regularly.

10. Distance education courses will be developed in accordance with the following principles:
  - a. Address state needs;
  - b. Operate programs collaboratively and share resources, if appropriate;
  - c. Base program decisions on documented student or citizen need;
  - d. Work with constituent groups (*e.g., K-12 school districts, employers, industry representatives*) to identify and prioritize the most pressing educational needs;
  - e. Use a combination of technologies, as appropriate to support curricular needs and student learning styles;
  - f. Ensure that academic plans influence the expansion of the technical infrastructure;
  - g. Provide essential support services to students;
  - h. Build institutional and system capacity to address more needs through distance learning;
  - i. Be accountable to the Legislature and the public for their use of state resources and the quality and appropriateness of their services; and
  - j. Partner with or broker programs from out-of-state institutions, where appropriate.
  
11. Each campus may develop policies and procedures for the approval of distance education courses and programs.
  
12. When institutional funds are used to purchase distance education equipment, that equipment is owned by the institution. Institutions accepting ownership of distance education equipment also accept responsibility for maintenance and service of that equipment.

When distance education equipment owned by an institution is located at a non-NSHE site or such equipment is shared with non-NSHE institutions, a Memorandum of Understanding (*MOU*) shall be completed. The *MOU* will clearly specify the responsibilities of each party and what level of funding each party provides to support the equipment and related charges.
  
13. When distance education equipment is purchased by System Computing Services (SCS) for the support of NSHE institutions, the ownership of that equipment shall be retained by SCS, in addition to the responsibility for the maintenance, servicing, and operation of that equipment.
  
14. Oversight of scheduling and switching of interactive video is the responsibility of SCS. SCS will work with institutional representatives, particularly in regards to installation, connectivity, and transmission.

(B/R 11/07)