

# Wyoming Community Colleges

## Responding to the Growing Need for Distance Education

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**Wyoming  
Community Colleges**  
*The Smart Choice®*

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Wyoming's community colleges are committed to providing quality access to education through existing and emerging educational technology in order to assist in serving the education and workforce training needs of the people of Wyoming.  
Distance Education Task Force,  
December 2003

## Introduction

Over 1.6 million students (or 11% of all U.S. higher education students) took at least one online course during Fall 2002. Over one-third of these students (578,000) took all of their courses online. The number of students taking at least one online course is projected to increase by 20% to 1.9 million students by Fall 2003.<sup>1</sup> The number of distance education courses offered by Wyoming's seven colleges has grown dramatically over the last eight years, from a handful in 1994-95 to 284 in 2002-03. The barriers of geography and time are no longer as daunting for students in Wyoming thanks to the rapid evolution of support technologies that allow for efficient and quality delivery of instruction.

On August 11, 2003 the Executive Council met in the morning. That afternoon a special meeting was held. During that session, college presidents, academic deans, distance education representatives and some of the staff from the Wyoming Community College Commission gathered to discuss possibilities regarding the current status and future possibilities of distance education. From that brainstorming session a task force was formed to further explore the key concepts voiced during the discussion and to provide recommendations. Over the course of three intense meetings, the task force continued to base their discussions on three key concepts: 1) the need to ensure high quality in both the training to develop and teach distance education courses and the quality of the courses, 2) the commitment to supporting the continued growth of distance education without creating a bureaucratic structure at either the college or state level, and 3) the focus on working together as partners while recognizing the priorities and independence of each college.

<sup>1</sup> Allen, E. and Seaman, J., (2003). Seizing the Opportunity: The Quality and Extent of Online Education in the United States, 2002 and 2003. Alfred P. Sloan Foundation: Needham, MA

## Task Force Goals

To provide recommendations for building and sustaining a coordinated approach to distance education among Wyoming's community colleges that

1. Maximizes educational access and opportunities for Wyoming residents and others,
2. Develops processes that support distance education for the students, faculty and support staff,
3. Improves the communication and articulation processes for distance education offerings,
4. Promotes both the quality of individual courses offered by the colleges as well as the continuing professional development of faculty,
5. Ensures the guidelines of the Higher Learning Commission are met as the number of distance education offerings increase and degrees evolve,
6. Builds upon existing relationships and processes among the colleges and with other key stakeholders involved in distance education, and
7. Assists in the development of a cooperative statewide community college arrangement that strengthens delivery of distance education courses and services.

## Guiding Principles

On September 22, 2003, the Executive Council reviewed and affirmed the following principles that will be used to guide the work of the Distance Education Task Force:

- A. The primary goal of distance education efforts at Wyoming's community colleges is to improve the process and ensure the quality of individual courses offered by the colleges. A secondary goal is to ensure that the guidelines of the Higher Learning Commission and the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools are met as distance education degrees evolve.

- B. The primary audience for distance education courses is Wyoming students/residents. However, if there is an interest in our distance education courses beyond Wyoming's borders, the process will be supportive and the quality will be appealing.
- C. The focus among the colleges will be on collaboration, possibly through a state-wide consortium if this makes sense, which:
- 1) Will be a choice by each college to participate.
  - 2) Will not involve unnecessary staff or policies.
  - 3) Will focus primarily on on-line courses.
  - 4) Will benefit students throughout Wyoming. Distance education will be characterized as a student-centered initiative focused on making it easier and productive for those who wish to pursue their post-secondary education through technology-driven courses such as on-line courses.
  - 5) Will benefit both the delivering college AND the home college of the student.

## Key Areas of Focus

### Trends in Distance Education

- ❖ The current higher education infrastructure cannot accommodate the growing college-aged population and enrollments, making more distance education programs necessary,
- ❖ Students are shopping for courses that meet their schedules and circumstances
- ❖ The institutional landscape of higher education is changing: traditional campuses are declining, for-profit institutions are growing, and public and private institutions are merging,
- ❖ Instruction is becoming more learner-centered, non-linear, and self-directed,
- ❖ Education is becoming more seamless between high school, college, and further studies
- ❖ Lifelong learning is becoming a competitive necessity,
- ❖ Academic emphasis is shifting from course-completion to competency,
- ❖ Internet usage continues to grow,

### Thirty-two Trends in Distance Education

<http://www.uwex.edu/disted/history.html>

## 1. Definition and Commitments

A clear understanding among the colleges of what distance education means will influence the development and success of this educational tool. The colleges in Wyoming subscribe to the following definition of distance education:

*Distance education is the process of supporting our customers, Wyoming's residents and the colleges' students, by extending learning opportunities and support services through technology to reduce the barriers of time and place.*

*Wyoming's colleges are committed to providing educational opportunities to learners who might not otherwise have access. To accomplish this requires a commitment of support from throughout the institution.*

### Colleges' vision for distance education

Wyoming's community colleges are committed to providing quality access to education through existing and emerging educational technology in order to assist in serving the education and workforce training needs of the people of Wyoming.

As a result of its discussions, the task force supports the following recommendations and action items in the form of deliverables:

### **DELIVERABLES—Definition and Commitment:**

1. Encourage the use of the Wyoming Distance Education Consortium (WyDEC) as a mechanism for reviewing, updating goals and communicating guiding principles, definitions and deliverables for distance education.
2. Explore ways to extensively advertise distance education opportunities.

## 2. Student Support Services

The task force members believe that an overarching theme for distance education initiatives ought to be a focus on supporting the customer, the students, to be successful in their distance education endeavors. As a result, the task force wants to emphasize this area. While there was no attempt to define what services ought to be provided, there was agreement that equivalent support services should be available for all students. Students themselves can help the colleges identify their needs, which can then become the basis for designing, offering and assessing appropriate support services.

The college environment is a challenge for students regardless of their unique life situations and they should be provided with opportunities to become oriented to not only the college itself, but also the unique aspects of taking classes through distance education. The challenge facing each college's faculty, staff, and administration is to create avenues to inform and encourage students to use support services and develop connections with the college community.

As a result of its discussions, the task force supports the following recommendations and action items in the form of deliverables:

### **Deliverables: STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

1. Assist in the identification of survey data that will help the colleges offer the right services in the best way, including surveying those students who do not complete distance education courses.
2. Identify additional funding resources for expanded and enhanced student support services.
3. Coordinate the identification of appropriate, key support services each college could provide and then identify ways to regularly assess their effectiveness.
4. Encourage the development of help desks based on the assessed needs of students, faculty and staff.
5. Support the development of both a centralized web site as well as college-based web sites that will provide maximum opportunities for students and prospective students to access distance education (see Deliverables—Best Practices, # 2, page 9).
6. Provide mechanisms for easy student access to support services from both course management platforms and individual courses.
7. Support the full use of electronic data exchange for transcripts not only among Wyoming colleges, but with the University of Wyoming and Wyoming's high schools.
8. Encourage the development of a process that will enable students to complete abbreviated online applications by having more direct access to system information on themselves which they can choose to share with another college.
9. Support the regular dissemination of information about support services to distance education students.
10. Facilitate the investigation of a mechanism whereby out-of-state transfer students could have their credits easily and quickly assessed to determine their qualifications for an online degree from a Wyoming college.

### **3. Faculty and Staff Development and Distance Education Teaching Qualifications**

Distance education courses, certificates and degrees happen only when all areas of the college provide encouragement and support. Key to distance education on any campus is the people who make it happen. Faculty and staff need support

#### **Distance Education in the United States**

90% of public 2-year institutions offer distance education courses.

1,472,000 students enrolled in distance education courses at public 2-year institutions (48% of the total enrollments in the U.S.)

Among the institutions that offered distance education in 2000-01, 60% participated in some type of consortium.

80% of public 2-year institutions participated in a consortium.

**Distance Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions: 2000-2001. U.S. Dept of Education and The Chronicle of Higher Education.**

in many areas to keep up with the ever-changing educational technologies and delivery mechanisms. Support comes in many forms including funding resources for course development, on-going opportunities for individual and state-wide professional development and networking and sharing of best practices. The quality of distance education offerings can be enhanced by providing opportunities for full- and part-time faculty to obtain distance education teaching credentials.

As a result of its discussions, the task force supports the following recommendations and action items in the form of deliverables:

### **Deliverables: FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND DISTANCE EDUCATION TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Continue the WyDEC annual conference, including WCCC support through the Incentive Fund, as a tool for networking, professional development, best-practices and training (See Deliverables—Statewide Coordination and Support Structures, #1, page 8).
2. Explore the possibility of developing and establishing distance education teaching credentials for full-time and adjunct faculty.
3. Encourage the creation of teams of distance education teachers that can provide on-site in-service training.

4. Encourage the continued use of the Academic Affairs Committee and the Student Services Committee as vehicles for discussing evolving distance education issues and needs and coordinating with WyDEC, Executive Council and stakeholders.

#### 4. Course and Program Development

Two essential elements of distance education are the successful development and delivery of the course and program to the student. The task force discussed this component from a number of different perspectives, such as the advantages of having standards and techniques to assess the quality of offerings, how to be ready for Higher Learning Commission reviews, improving retention of students and how to be actively engaged in planning for the growth of distance education in Wyoming.

As a result of its discussions, the task force supports the following recommendations and action items in the form of deliverables:

In July 2003, the U.S. Department of Education released a study revealing that almost 90% of American public colleges and universities offered electronic distance learning in the 2000-2001 academic year. Almost 60% of these distance learning-offering-institutions were participating in a consortium for distance learning.  
**Virtual College and University Consortia: A National Study.**  
Rhonda Epper and Myk Garn,  
August 2003.

##### **Deliverables: COURSE AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

1. Support the identification of techniques and standards that could assist colleges in assessing current and new distance education coursework and planning for new distance education initiatives.
2. Support the development of guidelines the colleges could use to assist them in developing new distance education courses to ensure quality.
3. Encourage WyDEC to offer relevant programs at its annual conference to assist administrators in tracking and quality assessment of distance education offerings.
4. Encourage colleges that have been visited by the Higher Learning Commission/North Central Association to share reports and resources with the other colleges.
5. Encourage the development of distance education offerings that could assist employers with workforce training.
6. Explore options for recognizing excellence and encouraging faculty to develop distance education courses.
7. Support the development of a process that will identify priority courses needed by students which would then be developed and offered in a coordinated manner by the colleges.
8. Promote the regular review of the student support services guidelines for distance education provided by the Higher Learning Commission, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

#### 5. Access

As the ninth largest state in square miles and the least populated, Wyoming's residents are challenged to maintain contact and to secure desired educational services. People in Wyoming have a real need for post-secondary education, workforce training and lifelong learning. They also face the formidable challenge of gaining access to opportunities available through Wyoming's colleges.

For the colleges there is the need to have evolving technological and curricular systems that will result in Wyoming's colleges being considered as the colleges of choice for distance education.

As a result of its discussions, the task force supports the following recommendations and action items in the form of deliverables:

##### **Deliverables: ACCESS**

1. Identify and encourage key individuals to become statewide guides or advisors for faculty and staff in areas such as FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) as they relate to distance education.
2. Promote on-going research into evolving technologies and infrastructure, such as Internet II and satellites, that will enable Wyoming's colleges to maintain the technological edge and market share.
3. Support the development of written instructions and accompanying software support systems that allow information sharing and ease of access for students to register at multiple colleges in the same semester, for example.

4. Explore the benefits and potentials that digitization of Wyoming Public Television will bring to the collection of distance education offerings in Wyoming.
5. Support discussions dealing with true open-entry, open-exit distance education courses.
6. Seek out connections with the Wyoming Department of Education on ways to maximize the use of the Wyoming Equality Network (WEN) and other distance education opportunities for high school students.
7. Support a statewide system of electronic encryption of data to ensure privacy and protect identities.

## 6. Statewide Coordination and Support Structures

"If you do an enrollment analysis you'll find that it's probably 90% general education courses. That's partially a function of what's available and it's partially a function of where students feel comfortable taking online courses. But the question in my mind—for community colleges—the real benefit to online is the ability to deliver the occupational programs online and to share in high-cost, low-enrollment programs. As far as I'm concerned we've really been doing the low hanging fruit and the real promise is still in the future." Comment from one of the study participants about distance education courses.

**Virtual College and University Consortium: A National Study,**  
**Rhonda Epper and Myk Garn,**  
**Aug 03. page 22.**

A national study ("Virtual College and University Consortia") was published in August 2003 as a joint effort by the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) and the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications (WCET). In the study, states were classified into one of four types based on governance structure. The majority of the states have a system office/governing board (45%) or a statewide coordinating board (25%). Another 12% have a VCU (Virtual College and University) board that regulates distance education learning programs. The last 19% coordinate with some type of statewide consortium, which may be made up of representatives from postsecondary education and other interest groups. The key was that each state was providing distance education offerings in an organizational structure that fit its needs. Wyoming as a participant in the study was classified as one of those states with a consortium type of coordinating and support structure. Much credit needs to be given to those individuals on each college campus who worked diligently to provide the support for the colleges through the evolving Wyoming Distance Education Consortium. It is encouraging to note Wyoming has already resolved two of the key issues in distance education that a consortium is saddled with: a standard tuition rate and common course numbers.

The number of distance education offerings at Wyoming's colleges has steadily increased over the past ten years. Most of the growth has been dependent on the interest and initiative of the individual faculty member. Among all seven colleges 284 distance education courses were listed on the consolidated list of courses for the Fall 2003 semester that resides on Casper College's web site. A few colleges are reaching a critical mass wherein the accumulated coursework is almost enough to earn a degree online. The focus among Wyoming's colleges seems to be shifting to several key areas:

- A. Examining and validating distance education course and degrees against Higher Learning Commission/North Central Association guidelines,
- B. Providing financial and technological support to design and implement support structures and services,
- C. Identifying the role and support functions of the Wyoming Community College Commission, and
- D. Evaluating the concept of an Information Clearinghouse for distance education.

Discussions by the Executive Council, the Academic Affairs Committee as well as the Distance Education Task Force resulted in a consensus regarding statewide coordination of distance education among Wyoming's colleges. It is the recommendation of the task force that the existing Wyoming Distance Education Consortium (WyDEC) has the potential of continuing to serve as the statewide coordinating group if it is supported with the following:

- A. Formal recognition as a coordinating entity for distance education offerings among Wyoming's colleges,
- B. A clear mission statement,
- C. A clear reporting system for recommendations,

Further recommendations that address these three items are outlined in Appendix C.

The task force further encourages the Incentive Funds, available through the Wyoming Community College Commission, be used to support research and resources, including the use of a consultant if needed, to help WyDEC address specific needs or questions. The task force did not see the benefit in hiring a consultant at this time to address global issues associated with a consortium.

As a result of its discussions, the task force supports the following recommendations and action items in the form of deliverables:

### **Deliverables: STATEWIDE COORDINATION AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES**

1. Formally recognize and further define the role of the Wyoming Distance Education Consortium (WyDEC) as the statewide coordination body for Wyoming's distance education. (See Appendix C)
2. Encourage continued support for expanded WyDEC statewide conferences as a viable mechanism to serve students through further coordination among colleges, assisting faculty and staff development, and expanding the number of quality courses.
3. Evaluate and provide recommendations, through peer reviewers at each college, on the distance education web sites at each college as well as at the Commission.
4. Explore, through WyDEC, structures and practices that will respect the goals of individual colleges while increasing distance education enrollments.
5. Promote coordination between academic and information technology personnel on each campus.
6. Support the coordination of distance education technology needs including purchases by the colleges, with the assistance of WCCC.
7. Explore the issues surrounding tuition and required fees for distance education students, including those attending multiple Wyoming colleges in the same semester.
8. Explore the potential role Datatel could serve in providing data and research support systems to assist the colleges in providing user-friendly, secure, interoperable services for distance education students.

## **8. Best Practices**

Responsible innovation has been encouraged within a system of accountability grounded in enduring values and principles through which quality has been defined. The result has been an ever-expanding set of educational opportunities, marked by diversity and excellence, to meet the changing needs of our society.

**Statement of Commitment by the Regional Accrediting Commissions for the Evaluation of Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs**

A recurring theme during the task force's deliberations was the commitment to support regularly and energetically the evolution and development of quality distance education offerings at Wyoming's colleges. A number of recommendations in previous sections of this report support this concept. One additional process that was regularly mentioned was the need to develop a statewide method of cooperatively and consistently sharing "best practices" among Wyoming's community colleges. The creation of this service was seen as the way quality could be maintained in both coursework as well as support services. The Wyoming Community College Commission was seen as a key to this statewide service.

As a result of its discussions, the task force supports the following recommendations and action items in the form of deliverables:

### **Deliverables: BEST PRACTICES**

1. Encourage research into the development of measures and baselines for quality distance education coursework and support services.
2. Promote the development of a clearinghouse of distance education expertise such as best-practices, fiscal resources for consultative improvements, model software, next generation technologies, next generation delivery modes, networking, standards and policies, and use of the WCCC web site as a vehicle for dissemination.
3. Coordinate the identification of additional definitions and common terms.

## **Summary and Next Steps**

Since 1995 when the first Internet course was offered by a Wyoming college, the growth in this alternative educational delivery mechanism has been impressive. The independent and cutting-edge efforts of Wyoming's faculty made a difference. Lately the dedicated efforts of the fledgling Wyoming Distance Education Consortium resulted in purposeful faculty training as well as coordination among the colleges. In August of 2003, a discussion by representatives from all the colleges, resulted in the next step in the commitment to offer quality distance education offerings: the Distance Education Task Force.

The multitude of deliverables in this report is a testament to the interest and vision of the colleges. The recommendations of the task force will be reviewed by both the Academic Affairs and Student Services Committees before being presented to the Executive Council.

This report was created by the colleges, for the colleges. It is their roadmap for their commitment to providing quality access to education through existing and emerging educational technology in order to assist in serving the education and workforce training needs of the people of Wyoming.

## Appendix A

### Deliverables:

1. Encourage the use of the Wyoming Distance Education Consortium (WyDEC) as a mechanism for reviewing, updating goals and communicating guiding principles, definitions and deliverables for distance education.  
**Responsibility of:** Executive Council  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Apr 04
2. Explore ways to extensively advertise distance education opportunities.  
**Responsibility of:** WCCC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Apr 04
3. Assist in the identification of survey data that will help the colleges offer the right services in the best way, including surveying those students who do not complete distance education courses.  
**Responsibility of:** Student Services Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** May 04
4. Identify additional funding resources for expanded and enhanced student support services.  
**Responsibility of:** Executive Council  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Aug 04
5. Coordinate the identification of appropriate, key support services each college could provide and then identify ways to regularly assess their effectiveness.  
**Responsibility of:** Student Services Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** May 04
6. Encourage the development of help desks based on the assessed needs of students, faculty and staff.  
**Responsibility of:** WyDEC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Aug 04
7. Support the development of both a centralized web site as well as college-based web sites that will provide maximum opportunities for students and prospective students to access distance education.  
**Responsibility of:** WCCC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Sept 04
8. Provide mechanisms for easy student access to support services from both course management platforms and individual courses.  
**Responsibility of:** WyDEC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Sept 04
9. Support the full use of electronic data exchange for transcripts not only among Wyoming colleges, but the University of Wyoming and Wyoming's high schools.  
**Responsibility of:** WCCC/Student Services Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** July 04
10. Encourage the development of a process that will enable students to complete abbreviated online applications by having more direct access to system information on themselves which they can choose to share with another college.  
**Responsibility of:** Student Services Committee/WCCC/Datatel  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Dec 04
11. Support the regular dissemination of information about support services to distance education students.  
**Responsibility of:** Student Services Committee/WyDEC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Dec 04

12. Facilitate the investigation of a portfolio mechanism whereby out-of-state transfer students could have their credits easily and quickly assessed to determine their qualifications for an online degree from a Wyoming college.  
**Responsibility of:** Academic Affairs Committee/WyDEC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Mar 05
13. Continue the WyDEC annual conference as a tool for networking, professional development, best-practices and training.  
**Responsibility of:** WyDEC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** May 04
14. Explore the possibility of developing and establishing distance education teaching credentials for full time and adjunct faculty.  
**Responsibility of:** WyDEC/Academic Affairs Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Feb 05
15. Encourage the creation of teams of distance education master teachers that can provide on-site in-service training.  
**Responsibility of:** WyDEC/Academic Affairs Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Mar 05
16. Encourage the continued use of the Academic Affairs Committee and the Student Services Committee as vehicles for discussing evolving distance education issues and needs and coordinating with WyDEC, Executive Council and stakeholders.  
**Responsibility of:** Academic Affairs and Student Services Committees  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Apr 04
17. Support the identification of techniques and standards that could assist colleges in assessing current and new distance education coursework and planning for new distance education initiatives.  
**Responsibility of:** WyDEC/Academic Affairs Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Aug 04
18. Support the development of guidelines the colleges could use to assist them in reviewing new distance education courses to ensure quality.  
**Responsibility of:** WyDEC/Academic Affairs Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Aug 04
19. Encourage WyDEC to offer relevant programs at its annual conference to assist administrators in tracking and quality assessment of distance education offerings.  
**Responsibility of:** WyDEC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** May 04
20. Encourage colleges that have been visited by the Higher Learning Commission/North Central Association to share reports and resources with the other colleges.  
**Responsibility of:** Academic Affairs Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** May 04
21. Encourage the development of distance education courses that could assist employers with workforce training.  
**Responsibility of:** Academic Affairs Committee/Wyoming Workforce Alliance/Campus Workforce Training Coordinators  
**Target Date/Timeline:** May 04
22. Explore options for recognizing excellence and encouraging faculty to develop distance education courses.  
**Responsibility of:** WyDEC/Academic Affairs Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Sept 04
23. Support the development of a process that will identify priority courses needed by students which would then be developed and offered in a coordinated manner by the colleges.  
**Responsibility of:** Academic Affairs Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Sept 04

24. Promote the regular review of student support services guidelines for distance education provided by the Higher Learning Commission, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.  
**Responsibility of:** Student Services Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** May 04
25. Identify and encourage key individuals to become statewide guides or advisors for faculty and staff in the areas such as FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) as they relate to distance education.  
**Responsibility of:** Student Services Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** May 04
26. Promote on-going research into evolving technologies and infrastructure, such as Internet II and satellites, that will enable Wyoming's colleges to maintain the technological edge and market share.  
**Responsibility of:** Executive Council/WyDEC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Dec 04
27. Support the development of written instructions and accompanying software support systems that promotes information sharing and ease of access for students to register at multiple colleges in the same semester, for example.  
**Responsibility of:** WyDEC/Student Services Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Dec 04
28. Explore the benefits and potentials that digitization of Wyoming Public Television will bring to the constellation of distance education offerings in Wyoming.  
**Responsibility of:** WPTV/Academic Affairs Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Sept 04
29. Support discussions dealing with true open-entry, open-exit distance education courses.  
**Responsibility of:** Academic Affairs Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Dec 04
30. Seek out connections with the Wyoming Department of Education on ways to maximize the use of the Wyoming Equality Network (WEN) and other distance education opportunities for high school students.  
**Responsibility of:** WCCC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Aug 04
31. Support a statewide system of electronic encryption of data to ensure privacy and protect identities.  
**Responsibility of:** WCCC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** May 04
32. Formally recognize and further define the role of the Wyoming Distance Education Consortium (WyDEC) as the statewide coordination body for Wyoming's distance education.  
**Responsibility of:** Executive Council  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Apr 04
33. Encourage continued support for expanded WyDEC statewide conferences as a viable mechanism to serve students through further coordination among colleges, assisting faculty and staff development, and expanding the number of quality courses.  
**Responsibility of:** Executive Council/WCCC/Academic Affairs Committee, Student Services Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Apr 04
34. Evaluate and provide recommendations, through peer reviewers at each college, on the distance education web sites at each college as well as at the Commission.  
**Responsibility of:** Student Services Committee/WCCC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Apr 04

35. Explore, through WyDEC, structures and practices that will respect the goals of individual colleges while increasing distance education enrollments.  
**Responsibility of:** Academic Affairs Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** May 04
36. Promote coordination between academic and information technology personnel on each campus.  
**Responsibility of:** WyDEC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** May 04
37. Support the coordination of distance education technology needs including purchases by the colleges, with the assistance of WCCC.  
**Responsibility of:** WCCC/WyDEC/Academic Affairs Committee and Student Services Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Aug 04
38. Explore the issues surrounding tuition and required fees for distance education students, including those attending multiple Wyoming colleges in the same semester.  
**Responsibility of:** Academic Affairs Committee/WyDEC/Student Services Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Dec 04
39. Explore the potential role Datatel could serve in providing data and research support systems to assist the colleges in providing user-friendly, secure, interoperable services for distance education students.  
**Responsibility of:** WCCC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Apr 04
40. Encourage research into the development of measures and baselines for quality distance education coursework and support services.  
**Responsibility of:** Academic Affairs Committee/WyDEC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Aug 04
41. Promote the development of a clearinghouse of distance education expertise such as best-practices, fiscal resources for consultative improvements, model software, next generation technologies, next generation delivery modes, networking, standards and policies, and use of the WCCC web site as a vehicle for dissemination.  
**Responsibility of:** WyDEC/WCCC  
**Target Date/Timeline:** May 04
42. Coordinate the identification of additional definitions and common terms.  
**Responsibility of:** WyDEC/Academic Affairs Committee  
**Target Date/Timeline:** Dec 04

## Appendix B

### Calendar for Deliverables

Deliverables	Spring 04			Summer 04			Fall 04			Winter 04-05		
	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
1. Use WyDEC for statewide coordination, review, update	X											
2. Advertise DE opportunities	X											
3. Survey for support services and non-completers		X										
4. Find funding resources for support services					X							
5. Identify, implement and assess core support services		X										
6. Develop help desks based on assessed needs					X							
7. Fully develop web sites to support DE						X						
8. Link student support to courses and assessed needs						X						
9. Full use of electronic transfers at colleges & High Schools				X								
10. Easier process to take DE courses at other colleges									X			
11. Regularly "push" support info to students									X			
12. Use portfolio mechanism to encourage out-of-state registrations												X
13. Continue annual WyDEC conference		X										
14. Adopt teaching credentials											X	
15. On-site in-service training for faculty												X
16. AA and SS Committees for evolution of DE	X											
17. Techniques and standards for development and assessment of DE initiatives					X							
18. Guidelines for evaluating new DE courses					X							
19. Track at WyDEC conference for administrators		X										
20. Sharing after HLC/NCA visits		X										
21. Develop DE courses for workforce training		X										
22. Create fund to recognize excellence in DE teaching						X						
23. Coordinated development of most needed courses		X										
24. Review HLC-NCA guidelines especially for support services		X										
25. Develop statewide experts in areas such as FERPA and ADA		X										
26. Future technologies—internet II and satellite									X			
27. Networking among students									X			
28. Potentials of a digitized WPTV						X						
29. True open-entry, open-exit DE courses									X			
30. Maximize WEN usage and other distance ed opportunities					X							
31. Statewide electronic encryption of data		X										
32. Recognize and enhance role of WyDEC	X											
33. Continue and expand annual WyDEC conference	X											
34. Evaluate and improve WCCC and colleges' web sites	X											
35. Increase DE enrollments		X										
36. Coordination among DE and IT personnel on each campus		X										
37. IT purchases coordinated statewide					X							
38. Tuition and fees issues for enrollments at multiple colleges									X			
39. Use Datatel to improve services		X										
40. Measures and baselines for evaluating DE courses and services					X							
41. WCCC coordinates statewide clearinghouse on central website		X										
42. Definitions and common terms									X			

## Appendix C

### Wyoming Distance Education Consortium (WyDEC)

The *Wyoming Distance Education Consortium (WyDEC)* includes representatives from the seven Wyoming community colleges, the University of Wyoming, Wyoming Public Television and the Wyoming Community College Commission. The recommendations of the Consortium will be provided to the Wyoming Community College Executive Council through the Academic Affairs Committee as they pertain to academic affairs and through the Student Services Committee as they pertain to student services.

#### The Vision

Wyoming's community colleges are committed to providing quality access to education through existing and emerging educational technology in order to assist in serving the education and workforce training needs of the people of Wyoming.

#### The Mission

The mission of the *Wyoming Distance Education Consortium (WyDEC)* is to coordinate the delivery of quality, cost-effective, innovative distance education programs and courses as well as quality student services and instructional support to all our potential and enrolled students, regardless of geographic or temporal limitations.

To support its vision and implement its mission, the *Wyoming Distance Education Consortium (WyDEC)* establishes the following strategies that are based on the recommended deliverables in the Distance Education Task Force report:

- Provide support and resources to overcoming the obstacles of time, place, work, and family obligations that may interfere with educational opportunities for our students, particularly from un-served or underserved populations.
- Develop effective assessment programs to insure academic rigor and quality and to provide standards and accountability for all distance education courses and programs.
- Increase full access to quality distance education and student services through coordination of resources and statewide collaboration.
- Improve faculty productivity and effectiveness as teachers of distance education courses through a commitment to development programs and support structures.
- Support the efforts of Wyoming's community colleges leading to the accreditation of distance education programs through the Higher Learning Commission/North Central Association.
- Collaborate on funding opportunities to deal with the variety of needs associated with distance education.
- Provide for the coordination and design of professional development for faculty, student and instructional support personnel, and administration, including web-based networking and training.
- Provide for the coordination of an interpersonal network for the dissemination of distance education information to all institutions.

- Develop links to private organizations and state agencies in order to meet the training and educational needs of businesses for workforce development and economic development through distance education.
- Develop and demonstrate innovative, cost effective approaches to delivering education through the use of a statewide, user-transparent infrastructure that supports a variety of evolving distance learning advanced technologies.
- Promote economies of scale and qualitative improvements in distance education.
- Aggressively market opportunities for distance education.

**Appendix D:**

**Distance Education Fact Sheet**

Distance Education: Number of DE Courses Offered by WPTV by Year				
Wyoming Public TV	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
TOTAL				

Distance Education: Number of DE Courses Offered by College, by Type, by Year				
College:	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Internet				
Compressed Video				
Telecourse				
Video Tape				
TOTAL				

Courses offered = Count as 1 each course, including multiple sections of the same course, that was taught during the academic year (Summer, Fall or Spring semesters).

Distance Education: FTE and Annualized FTE by College, by Semester Total Annualized FTE and Distance Education as % of FTE						
College:	Distance Education FTE	Annualized Distance Ed FTE		Total FTE	Total Annualized FTE	Distance Ed as % of FTE
99/SU						
99/FA						
00/SP						
TOTAL						
00/SU						
00/FA						
01/SP						
TOTAL						
01/SU						
01/FA						
02/SP						
TOTAL						
02/SU						
02/FA						
03/SP						
TOTAL						
03/SU						
03/FA						
04/SP						
TOTAL						

## Distance Education Fact Sheet

Distance Education: Unduplicated Headcount, Gender, Average Age by College, by Semester Unduplicated Headcount by Place of Residence while Enrolled by Semester									
College:	Unduplicated Headcount	Male	Female	Average Age		In- County	Other Wyoming	Out-of- State	Out-of- Country
99/SU									
99/FA									
00/SP									
TOTAL									
00/SU									
00/FA									
01/SP									
TOTAL									
01/SU									
01/FA									
02/SP									
TOTAL									
02/SU									
02/FA									
03/SP									
TOTAL									
03/SU									
03/FA									
04/SP									
TOTAL									