

**University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Office of Extended Education & Outreach
Strategic Plan
2003-2006**

Introduction

The Office of Extended Education & Outreach (EE&O) was established in October of 1997 to: 1) facilitate increased participation by all colleges in providing lifelong learning as a core mission for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; and 2) create linkages between academic units that provide content for distance education and the supporting infrastructure necessary for these programs to succeed.

In the fall of 2002, as a result of budget reductions, the Office of Extended Education & Outreach was restructured and given full responsibility to provide administrative leadership in facilitating the offering of UNL's distance education programs, as deemed appropriate, in consultation with respective colleges and divisions.

UNL's priorities for development of distance education degree programs are listed in the following order:

1. Graduate and continuing education (i.e., non-credit) distance education offerings that are degree or certificate leading for professionals in fields of UNL's special expertise.
2. Modules to be used for credit as well as non-credit programs and that focus on specific learning outcomes.
3. Application of instructional technology to support learning for distance education and on-campus students.

To support this effort, the Department of Instructional Design & Development supports faculty engaged in distance education, helping to identify teaching strategies that are effective in a technology environment. Instructional designers consult on course design, as well as provide individualized hands-on development and production support. The newly configured Department of Distance Education Services extends the services of the campus to the distance learner. The department consults with academic units in supporting the educational needs of distance learners enrolled in the graduate programs available through UNL.

In addition, EE&O has administrative responsibility for the College Independent Study, Independent Study High School, Summer Reading, Fire Protection and noncredit programs, as well as the services that support these programs including business services, marketing, customer service, shipping and receiving, recruitment and

information systems. Each program as deemed appropriate, is coordinated in collaboration with academic colleges/faculty, support services and local/state/regional organizations and agencies.

The Office of Extended Education & Outreach is committed to seven high-priority overarching objectives: academic partnerships; student and faculty support services; creativity and innovation; uncompromising pursuit of excellence; public awareness and support for distance education; evaluating current procedures and processes; and creating an organizational culture that fosters a supportive atmosphere.

As the University of Nebraska-Lincoln embarks on an increased commitment to serve distance students, EE&O is committed to provide the leadership and administrative support to help academic colleges and distance students succeed.

Vision

Extended Education & Outreach, in partnership with academic colleges, will create an uncompromising pursuit of excellence in bringing high quality distance education opportunities to the citizens of Nebraska and the world.

Mission

The mission of EE&O is to facilitate the development of distance education as a core mission of the University in partnership with academic colleges, support service units and community leaders. This focus will:

- Support and encourage faculty efforts and innovation.
- Enhance student support services for distance learners.
- Facilitate collaborative partnerships among campuses of the University and with other educational institutions, organizations and businesses.
- Work with University and academic college administration to provide incentives for expanding the distance education efforts across broad segments of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
- Address policies that serve as barriers for the delivery and support of distance education.
- Seek resources necessary to sustain an engaged teaching and research distance education effort.
- Coordinate the technological base and infrastructures used to deliver distance education with Information Services, Nebraska Educational Telecommunications and Cooperative Extension to assure effectiveness of resources.

- Deliver local and distance noncredit programs that meet the business and lifelong learning needs of Nebraska citizens.
- In partnership with academic colleges and other organizations, identify and serve distance education target markets in Nebraska and the world.
- Maintain and establish new partnerships with other university support services to enhance operations.

Assumptions

- There is a growing need by citizens of Nebraska and the world to have access to high quality distance learning courses so that they can resolve a high school deficiency or acquire a diploma, attain degrees or enhance their career/professional development regardless of location.
- Technology makes it possible to provide high quality teaching and learning opportunities to students/lifelong learners.
- Higher education institutions that respond effectively to the needs of lifelong learners will experience increased statewide support.
- Competition within the distance education industry will continue to increase, as a result providers of distance education programs will need to be attentive to the needs of the various markets served and adjust quickly to meet the needs.
- Providing local access to higher education can contribute to the economic stability of Nebraska families and communities.

Guiding Principles

EE&O staff will advance the core values of learning-system excellence, accessibility, diversity, accountability, partnership, professional growth, and ambassadorship by:

Pursuing an uncompromising pursuit of *excellence* as the quality standard for all EE&O work/programs.

Designing all work/programs with learner *accessibility* in mind.

Recognizing and valuing the *diverse* perspectives, backgrounds, and talents of our staff partners and society's wide range of learners.

Being *responsive* and *accountable* to the faculty, students, staff, and other internal and external audiences served.

Pursuing collaborative *partnerships* among staff, and with faculty, departments, and campuses of the University, other educational institutions, private businesses and community leaders.

Providing *professional growth* opportunities for all EE&O employees.

Serving as *ambassadors* of distance education to create a consistent image and mission for distance education programs and to raise University and public awareness of their importance.

Strategic Goals

1. Work with and provide creative leadership in helping academic colleges make distance education a core mission.
 - Funding support for course development, research and training
 - Instructional design support
 - Faculty and graduate assistant training
 - Addressing administrative issues and providing encouragement
 - Sharing creativity and innovations in teaching and learning methods
 - Identifying research and program opportunities
 - Program planning
2. Facilitate and manage linkages between academic colleges and educational institutions that provide distance education programs and supporting infrastructure necessary for these programs to succeed.
 - Student support services
 - Faculty support services
 - Elimination of barriers
 - Mainstream services where appropriate
 - Clarification and dissemination of support services information
3. Create strong collaborative partnerships with academic college administrators and faculty.
 - College Independent Study and Summer Reading Programs
 - Intercampus collaboration, sharing distance education courses, promoting programs, training, etc
 - Collaboration with institutions within and outside Nebraska
 - Develop partnerships with public, private and community organizations and educational institutions at all levels

- Create a “process for partnerships” document for internal distribution showing key steps in forming partnerships
 - Create and reference a showcase of UNL EE&O instructional delivery solutions
4. Create an uncompromising pursuit of excellence in the planning, research and development, delivery and assessment of distance education courses, programs and services.
- Establish guiding principles for assessing the quality of distance education programs
 - Engage in active and continuous research and evaluation of programs and services
 - Respond quickly to state, national and international legislative, environmental and/or industry trends
 - Faculty training
 - Student support services
 - Innovation and application of technology
 - Recognition of staff and faculty
 - Collaborative partnerships
 - Addressing administrative issues
 - National visibility for programs of excellence
 - Educational awards for faculty teaching distance education courses
5. Create an awareness program for internal and external audiences that promote and build support for UNL’s distance education programs.
- University policy makers
 - State elected officials
 - Faculty
 - Community leaders
 - K-12 administrators
 - Extension educators
 - National leaders
 - Define program target audiences and develop promotional materials
 - Use high school to recruit students to UNL
6. Respond to statewide credit and noncredit educational programming needs that support area economic development, leadership development, management skills training and increased organizational productivity and/or profits.
- Learning center programming
 - Cooperative Extension educator and specialist program support
 - University and community organizational partnerships
 - Online training programs

- Provide alternative high school course and diploma program solutions
7. Evaluate current procedures and processes to determine and implement more efficient and effective operations within the EE&O organization.
- Develop policy manuals
 - Customer service processes including help desk, instructional support and recruitment/promotional processes and standards
 - Assignment processing
 - Develop a quality assurance program
 - Information system evaluation
 - Business process evaluation
8. Create an organizational culture that fosters a supportive atmosphere, creative thinking, open communications, collaborative problem solving and encourages sharing ideas and talents with other staff.
- Professional development brown bag sessions
 - Staff professional growth goals
 - Participatory staff meetings
 - Team projects that cross department boundaries
 - Bulletin board or web message board for sharing information and improving communications
 - Staff recognition program