

Distance Delivery Confirmation Form

Confirmation of Institutional Eligibility for Distance Delivery Approval

Submitting the Distance Delivery Confirmation of Eligibility Form

Answers to the questions below will constitute the documentation needed for the Commission to confirm the institution's eligibility for distance delivery approval.

The questions are designed to elicit brief, succinct, detailed information, rather than a narrative or references to extensive supporting documents. Do not attach other documents unless they are specifically requested in the questions. The total submission should be no more than 8-10 pages. Submit the completed application as a single electronic document (in Adobe PDF format) emailed to changerequests@hlcommission.org.

Institution: Southeastern Oklahoma State University **City, State:** Durant, OK 74701

Name of person completing this application: Bryon K. Clark

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Date: 12 July 2012



Approval of distance education offerings



Approval of correspondence education offerings

Part 1. Institutional Context

1. Is the institution, in its relations with other regional, specialized, or national accrediting agencies, currently under or recommended for a negative status or action (e.g., withdrawal, probation, sanction, warning, or show-cause, etc.)?	YES NO	
2. Is the institution now undergoing or facing substantial monitoring, special review, or financial restrictions from the U.S. Dept. of Education or other federal or state government agencies?	YES NO	
3. Has the institution's senior leadership or Board membership experienced substantial resignations or removals in the past year?	YES NO	

4. Is the institution experiencing financial difficulty through such conditions as a currently declared state of exigency, a deficit of 10% or more, or a default or failure to make payroll during the past year, or consecutive deficits in the two most recent years?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
5. Is the institution experiencing other pressures that might affect its ability to carry out the proposal (e.g., a collective bargaining dispute or a significant lawsuit)?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	

Part 2. Characteristics of the Change Requested

6. What percentage of the institution's total degree programs is currently offered through distance delivery (see page 1 for the Commission's definition of distance-delivered programs)? **Please specify the percentage offered by distance education AND the percentage offered by correspondence education.**

A total of 92% of our undergraduate and graduate programs meets the new definition used for distance education; no (0%) program is offered by correspondence education. This is in marked contrast no (0%) program classified as a distance-education using the old definition. As expected, such change has caused considerable discussion (see item 12 below).

7. What organizational structures are in place to ensure effective oversight, implementation, and management of the institution's distance-delivered offerings?

Ultimate oversight of all academic programming is the responsibility of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs—Academic Outreach and Research ensures that distance-education offerings are consistent and compatible with outreach initiatives. The Assistant Dean for Distance and Adult Education/Assessment Management Coordinator is primarily responsible for the operational oversight of distance education. This individual also chairs the Distance Education Council (DEC) which functions to provide leadership in evaluating, reviewing, assessing, and developing the distance education philosophy and curriculum. Any recommendation by the DEC concerning philosophies and policies of distance education is submitted to the Academic Council.

The Assistant Dean coordinates the review of existing and new courses delivered via distance education. The Assistant Dean also coordinates the training and review of faculty teaching distance education courses. The academic department has ultimate control over which courses and/or programs have been (or will be) developed for delivery via distance education, as well as the academic credentials/experience of faculty teaching distance education courses. It is the department's responsibility to demonstrate equivalency of student learning and achievement of all delivery formats during the annual program outcomes assessment report (see response to Item 33).

8. Does the institution have a separately identified organizational unit for providing or marketing the distance-delivered offerings? () Yes (X) No

If yes, please explain how this separate unit coordinates with other academic and administrative units across the institution to ensure the consistency and quality of offerings.

Not applicable.

9. If the institution has any involvement by external organizations (other than accredited higher education institutions) in key operations as identified below, provide the information requested for each involvement.

(Note that such involvement by a parent company or by one of its subsidiaries external to the institution in any of these operations should be reported.)

Type of involvement	Name(s) of external organization(s)	% of Involvement
A. Support for delivery of instruction	Blackboard Learn 9.1 Enterprise	Distance education courses use Bb to support instruction
B. Recruitment and admission of students	N.A.	
C. Course placement and advising of students	N.A.	
D. Design and oversight of curriculum	N.A.	
E. Direct instruction and oversight	N.A.	

10. If the institution has any involvement with other accredited higher education institutions in key operations identified above, provide the name(s) of the other institutions and the nature of the involvement.

In 2007, a statewide consortium of colleges and universities affiliated with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) created a bachelor's degree completion program called "Reach Higher" that helps adults with some education but no degree to finish their degree by taking online and blended courses. Students have the option of enrolling at any of nine universities in the state to earn credit towards a bachelor's degree regardless of distance to the college or university. Using distance-delivery technology to increase flexible course schedules and distance-delivery options, students who may have otherwise been restricted by time, work, or family obligations now have the ability and affordable means to complete a degree through this nationally-recognized program. To promote continuity and consistency of this program (including items A-E listed above), faculty and staff from all institutions participating in Reach Higher, plus staff from the OSRHE, meet 4 times per year to discuss the delivery and content of courses, best practices, and challenges and successes encountered. The nine participating universities are: Cameron University, East Central University, Langston University, Northeastern Oklahoma State University, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Rodgers State University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, and University of Central Oklahoma.

After the Reach Higher program was implemented for the baccalaureate degree, a new initiative was developed to promote completion of an associate's degree; 14 community colleges throughout the state are participating in this program. Representatives of all 23 colleges and universities involved with Reach Higher meet at the quarterly meetings to promote consistency and continuity of this initiative as well as the matriculation of students from the associate to baccalaureate program of Reach Higher.

11. Operational Data

Operational Data	Last year (actual tallies)	This year (estimate)	Next year (projected)
A. Total annual (academic year + summer) student credit hours generated	97,869	96,906	96,906
B. Total annual student credit hours generated in distance-delivered sections (if available)	27,604	29,931	30,230 (+ 1%)

C. Percentage of student credit hours in distance-delivered courses (B/C, or B divided by A, rounded up to the nearest integer)	28%	31%	31%
D. Total number of academic programs (i.e., counting different majors at all levels)	51	52	52
E. Total number of programs in item D above available via distance delivery (i.e., 50% or more of courses available as distance-delivered courses)	48	48	48
F. Percentage of programs available via distance delivery (100 x E/D)	94%	92%	92%

Part 3. Institution's History with Distance-Delivered Offerings

12. Briefly describe the institution's experience with distance-delivered offerings.

Southeastern has used Interactive Educational Television (IETV) for more than 20 years and the internet (web-based using a Learning Management System platform) for more than 10 years to better accomplish our mission by providing additional educational opportunities at our outreach sites and throughout our service area. Since the initial delivery of these courses, programming has been expanded and modified to increase accessibility and take functional advantage of changes in technology (i.e., upgrades to equipment, hardware, and software). Initially, distance education offerings were limited and used primarily to deliver selected courses to additional locations. Over time, high demand programs were targeted for delivery at these sites. We currently use a model for program delivery at outreach sites that involves distance education offerings (both web-based and IETV) originating from the main campus coupled with face-to-face offerings by anchor faculty stationed at the sites; in some instances, faculty from the main campus travel to a site and deliver courses face-to-face. Face-to-face courses at a site, whether offered by anchor or main campus faculty, often are reverse transmitted to the main campus as well as to other sites via IETV. In this case, students on the main campus and other sites are considered in distance education courses but those at the point of origin are not. This model has been successfully used for students majoring in elementary education, criminal justice, and business.

The vast majority of undergraduate programs at Southeastern are identified as distance education primarily because students may meet all the general education requirements via distance delivery. When potential distance education hours in general education are coupled with potential distance education hours in the major and minor (or second major), students may complete 50% of the 124 semester hours required for graduation for literally all undergraduate programs; however, very few students have reached this threshold. In the last 6 academic years, no student has graduated from 25 of the 40 undergraduate programs identified as distance education with 50% or more of their credits earned from Southeastern via distance education; another 4 programs only had a single graduate meeting this 50% threshold.

Please note that not all general education courses are available via distance delivery. A student typically has the option to select from several courses to fulfill a specific general education requirement and at least one of these courses is available via distance delivery (at least during certain semesters). Further, the majority of courses and/or sections of courses in general education are still offered face-to-face. For example, 23 of 25 English Composition I sections offered during Fall Semester 2012 are traditional; only 2 sections are available via distance delivery. Even though students have the potential to selectively choose general education courses that are available via distance education, few (if any) complete all or even a significant portion of their general education via distance education.

Furthermore, numerous programs at Southeastern (e.g., B.S. in Aviation—Professional Pilot, B.S. in Biology, B.S. in Chemistry, B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife, B.S. in Mathematics) do not have a single course (required or elective) in the major offered via distance education. Even without a discipline-specific course in the major, these and other programs still meet the distance education definition because a student has the potential to reach the 50% threshold by taking courses to fulfill the general education and minor (or second major) requirements via distance education. This has been quite controversial, especially for faculty in departments that have few (if any) discipline-specific courses in the major delivered via distance education.

13. If the Higher Learning Commission approves the institution's initiation or expansion of distance delivery, what future growth does the institution anticipate (e.g., in the next six months, three years, 10-20 years)?

We do not anticipate more than a 1-2% increase in credit hour production per year via distance delivery in the foreseeable future. This increase will be due to the addition of more sections of already available courses and a limited number of new courses. The vast majority of programs offer only a few (if any) discipline-specific courses via distance education. For example, over 91% of all graduates that met the 50% threshold in the last six years were from only 12 of the 52 undergraduate and graduate programs offered. In 2010-11 and 2011-12 AY, 267 of 1,532 all graduates (17.4%) reached the 50% threshold; in the previous two academic years, the numbers were 221 of 1,510 (14.6%). Currently, there is no plan to change our institutional mission and significantly alter the existing overall mix of traditional and distance-education courses.

Future growth in distance delivery will be determined primarily by the faculty and department chairs of academic units that currently offer, or those that wish to offer, distance-education programming. Each academic unit will determine its capacity for growth. In consultation with the Dean of Instruction and the Office of Academic Affairs, such growth also will be examined with respect to institutional capacity to increase distance delivery and alignment of such expansion with our mission and strategic plan.

14. How does the institution plan to manage this growth?

Departments are responsible for ensuring they have the capacity to provide academic programming regardless of the delivery format. If additional faculty are needed to teach distance-education courses, departments can either seek to have more of their existing faculty certified to teach distance-education courses (see response to Items 26 and 27) or make requests for additional faculty during the annual budgeting process.

Part 4. Institutional Planning for Distance-Delivered Offerings

15. What concerns or expected improvements identified in previous Commission evaluations are applicable to distance delivery and how has the institution addressed them? (If none were raised, simply state "None.")

None.

16. How does the institution determine the need for distance-delivered offerings? How does the institution decide whether traditional programs should be offered via distance delivery?

The first consideration to determine need for distance-delivered offerings is will such activity allow Southeastern to better serve our constituencies (i.e., is it consistent with our mission and strategic initiatives). Need and demand for distance delivery of courses and programs are determined at the departmental level through student evaluations, pedagogical considerations, and faculty interest to develop and deliver courses in distance-based formats. The migration of traditional programming to distance delivery formats is under the purview of the academic department. In some instances, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Assistant Vice President for Academic Outreach and Research, and Assistant Dean for Distance and Adult Education will collaborate with departments to promote targeted programs at outreach sites.

17. How does the institution plan the role of distance delivery at the institution; i.e., for changes and future
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expansion of distance delivery? Who is involved? How do new ideas and initiatives originate, and how are they examined and evaluated?

The future role of distance education at Southeastern is primarily addressed by academic departments (faculty, department chair, and Dean of Instruction) and the DEC and Assistant Dean for Distance and Adult Education. Similar to traditional offerings, an academic unit may propose curricular changes in distance-education, or conversion of traditional to distance education, offerings through the appropriate standing committees and councils. The DEC and Assistant Dean research and present findings or proposals regarding distance education (e.g., upgrades to hardware and software, designs, best practices) to the Office of Academic Affairs for review. After considering costs/benefits, alignment with strategic initiatives, and compatibility with the University mission, the Office of Academic Affairs shares this information with appropriate entities. If proposed activities require curricular changes/modifications, the information is shared with the appropriate academic department for consideration. They in turn determine the unit's capacity and additional resources needed to implement the proposed initiative.

18. How does the institution ensure that financial planning and budgeting for distance-delivered offerings are realistic? What are the institution's projected revenues and expenses?

Department chairs and the Dean of Instruction develop a prioritized budget request for new funding initiatives and submits it to the Office of Academic Affairs. These new initiatives typically are based on the results of program outcomes assessment, program review, and specialized accreditation, as well as other sources of data. Other direct reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) also submit prioritized budget requests. The VPAA reviews these requests and may ask the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs—Academic Outreach and Research to provide additional data/information during the vetting process. The VPAA develops an overall budget request for Academic Affairs and submits it to the President. The President and Executive Team then review budget requests from all major areas to develop the University's overall budget; it is then presented to the Board of Regents of the Regional University System of Oklahoma. One new initiative related to distance education funded for AY 2012-13 is the University's participation in "Quality Matters."

Specifically, financial planning and budgeting for the distance education components are based on data collected in previous years as well as projected changes in enrollment for the pending fiscal year. Tuition collected is not differentiated by mode of delivery of instruction and all tuition revenue is placed in Education and General 1 (E&G 1) fund. Students also are assessed a fee for distance-education courses (\$75 and \$85 per credit hour for undergraduate and graduate level courses, respectively). In 2012-13 AY, revenue from the distance education fee is projected to be \$1,839,564. The projected expenses directly associated with distance education are listed below.

Expenses	Amount (\$)
Supplies and Other Operating Expenses	201,721
Travel	22,337
Contractual	198,596
Debt Service	147,464
Equipment	245,123
Communication	12,201
Printing	8,720
Salary and Benefits	1,003,402
Total Expenses	1,839,564

19. How does the institution assure that promotion, marketing, and enrollment of its distance-delivered offerings stay in balance with its actual resources and technical capabilities?

Most program-specific marketing/promotion is completed by the academic unit; the primary exception is the Reach Higher initiative (see response to Item 10) which has promotion and marketing completed by other partner institutions and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The hardware/software used to support distance-education delivery is not at capacity and there is substantial room for growth

before expansion/upgrades are necessary.

The number of courses offered via distance delivery is determined primarily by each department chair in collaboration with the Dean of Instruction. Once the overall University budget has been approved by the governing board each unit is provided its budget for the fiscal year. For academic departments, this budget includes specific allocations for both fulltime and part-time faculty. Department chairs and the Dean of Instruction base scheduling of all courses, traditional and distance education, on the allocated budget. Therefore, promotion and marketing of distance-delivery offerings stays in balance with the capacity of the department to deliver such offerings.

20. What controls are in place to ensure that the information presented to students in advertising, brochures, and other communications will be accurate?

Each academic unit has the responsibility of developing and assuring the accuracy of the content of program-specific informational brochures and other promotional material as well as departmental websites. Faculty and/or department chairs typically are asked to verify program-specific content of more University-wide promotional material developed by other entities (e.g., Dean of Enrollment Management, Director of Recruiting, Associate Dean for Academic Support, Director of University Communications).

Part 5. Curriculum and Instructional Design

21. How does the institution assure good instructional design in its distance-delivered offerings? How are the institution's faculty and quality control mechanisms involved in the instructional design process?

Faculty create and design their own distance-education course(s). They have the support of the entities listed below during course development and delivery. Faculty must be certified as a course designer (see response to item 27) before creating a new distance-education course. Each course developed for distance delivery is evaluated by the Assistant Dean of Distance and Adult Education and respective Department Chair to ensure that best practices for distance education are being used. On September 1, 2012 Southeastern will subscribe to Quality Matters; this will provide another avenue to ensure the quality of our distance-education offerings.

SE's Center for Instructional Design and Technology (CIDT), the Director of CIDT, the Assistant Dean of Distance and Adult Education, DEC and its Director, and Information Technology (IT) Departments are in place to enforce oversight, quality assurance, faculty development, student support, training, and maintenance of all distance-delivered offerings that include LMS, servers, software and hardware updates, pedagogy and best practices, and research.

22. What processes and procedures does the institution use for technology maintenance, upgrades, back up, remote services, and for communicating changes in software, hardware or technical systems to students and faculty?

Each month, at least a 5-hour maintenance window is scheduled for routine patches and other upgrades. This schedule is posted on the IT website; it is also e-mailed out to faculty, staff, and students.

The backup strategy for each system is determined by the risk and mitigation for that system. Backup strategies include real time, daily, weekly, and remote site backup for some systems. In addition to the primary data center, a second campus data center (equipped with UPS and Generator) is housed in a separate location and provides redundant campus systems. The University website and e-mail are the primary means used to communicate changes to the user community. Major system changes occur during off-season times (e.g. spring break, holidays, weekends).

23. How does the institution assure that it provides convenient, reliable, and timely services to students or faculty needing technical assistance, and how does it communicate information about these services?

Southeastern employs an IT helpdesk department that is staffed with 4 full-time employees and student workers. The Help Desk provides direct support for all computer labs and university-owned faculty/staff computing devices. These services are communicated via e-mail and appear on IT's website. Other IT

departments offer assistance with websites, telephone, and Student Information System (SIS) access. The Help Desk provides limited support for Blackboard; if they are not able to assist the individual (faculty, student, or staff), the individual is directed to the Center for Instructional Development and Technology (CIDT). The CIDT is open during regular University hours for walk-in traffic; assistance also may be requested by e-mail or phone. The Director of CIDT also serves as the Blackboard System Administrator for Users; therefore, the Director also regularly checks for messages when the Center is closed to ensure that emergency issues are addressed in a timely manner. Faculty and student support links are provided on the Bb login page, and then an SE Bb Help navigation button is provided within Bb, providing limited online support; a technical-support request form is available online.

24. What is the institution's experience, if any, in collaborating with other institutions or organizations to provide distance-delivered education?

See response to Item 10.

25. If the institution engages in partnerships or agreements with external organizations or institutions as identified in Questions 9 and 10, how does the institution ensure that students can use these services effectively?

Blackboard Learn (v. 9.1) offers 24/7 online support for both students and faculty to assist in success of distance-delivery courses. Additional support is available from the CIDT (see response to Item 23).

The Reach Higher Coordinators and faculty teaching courses in the Reach Higher program work to address specific issues as they arise. These challenges also are discussed during the quarterly meetings of all participating institutions.

Part 6. Institutional Staffing and Faculty Support

26. How does the institution staff distance-delivered offerings? How does this differ from the institution's processes for staffing traditional offerings?

In general, the process of staffing distance-delivered offerings does not differ from staffing of traditional offerings. Each department chair, working with the Dean of Instruction, develops the schedule of course offerings regardless of mode of delivery for each unit and assigns a faculty member to each course. All course assignments are based on the academic credentials and professional experience of each faculty member. The one exception to the staffing process for traditional vs. distance-delivery courses is that the Assistant Dean of Distance and Adult Education provides department chairs and the Dean of Instruction a list of faculty eligible to teach distance education courses (i.e., those that have successfully completed Southeastern's certification program for distance education or those that can provide evidence that they have successfully completed such training at another institution). The Assistant Dean verifies that all instructors have been certified; if not, they are required to enroll in the appropriate certification course (see response to Item 27).

27. What is the institution's process for selecting, training, and orienting faculty for distance delivery? What special professional development, support, or released time does the institution provide for faculty who teach distance-delivered offerings?

Each department chair identifies potential faculty members to teach distance-education courses by reviewing the academic credentials and experience of their faculty, as well as assessing their level of interest and proficiency in distance education. Once a faculty member is identified, a request for certification is submitted to the Assistant Dean of Distance and Adult Education for verification, and then to the Director of CIDT to enroll in either a Course Design Certification or Course Instructor Certification course to begin online training in preparation for a series of assessments to determine proficiency in pedagogy, best practices, and LMS delivery skills. Once the faculty member has successfully completed the course, an e-certificate is awarded, the Chair is notified, and the faculty member may then begin the process of creating and delivering an online course at SE.

All faculty who teach online or blended courses must complete either the Online Course Design or Online

Teaching online-certification course. In most instances, faculty have completed the certification process prior to teaching a course; however, in rare cases, a faculty member may concurrently complete the certification process during the first semester of teaching the course. The CIDT offers a variety of professional development opportunities for faculty and staff via workshops, seminars, conferences, one-on-one consultation (face-to-face and phone), on-line tutorials, and visiting scholars. Southeastern upgraded to the latest version of Blackboard and faculty workshops were held beginning in February 2011 until the present. Below are the statistics for the CIDT from June 2011 to May 2012.

- 16 Faculty Workshops on *Effective Usage of Blackboard*, attended by 66 full-time and adjunct faculty
- 134 One-on-One Consultations *via* the CIDT
- 1,054 Support Requests *via* phone *via* the CIDT
- 4,912 Email requests answered for Support/Assistance (both *via* the CIDT and from home)

Southeastern has an Incentive Compensation for Faculty program that rewards individuals for certain meritorious activities. During 2011-12 AY, \$42,250 was awarded to faculty for activities associated with the development and delivery of distance-education courses and other outreach efforts.

28. How does the institution assure copyright compliance and keep distance delivery faculty aware of institutional policies on using others' intellectual property?

The DEC and Assistant Dean for Distance and Adult Education encourage that the TEACH Act Copyright Notice (*The materials on the course Web site are only for the use of students enrolled in this course for purposes associated with this course and may not be retained or further disseminated.*) be included on the syllabi of all distance-education courses.

The Information Technology website details acceptable use policies related to computers and associated technology; it also contains links to policy regarding webpage development and content.

The Academic Policies and Procedures Manual available on the University website addresses copyright compliance and intellectual property issues.

Part 7. Student Support

29. How does the institution assure that distance delivery students have access to necessary student and support services (e.g., institutional information, application for admission, registration, tutoring or academic support, advising, financial aid, tuition payment, career counseling and placement, library resources, complaint processes)? How does the institution provide them information about using these services, and how does it monitor and evaluate their use of these services?

Students can obtain information and request services via the University website. In addition to in person, students may request information from any unit by phone, fax, or e-mail. Campus Connect is the Student Information System and it can be accessed by faculty, staff and students from on and off campus.

Admissions/Registrar—this office provides new first-year students, transfer students, and returning students an information packet with login information for Campus Connect, Bb, University e-mail, and the network. Students may apply online and supporting documents may be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to the Admissions Office. Students may view their transcript, class schedule, schedule of classes, and enroll online. Results for requests for services such as general education and graduations checks will be delivered to distance students via mail, fax, or e-mail.

Financial Aid and Tuition/Fee Payment—students are directed to use the University website and Campus Connect for all of their financial aid and scholarship information. Students can submit, track, and view their application and account at anytime as well as download and print needed information. Students also may use Campus Connect to access billing information and make payments. Payments may be made by mail or phone.

Academic Advising and Outreach Center (AAOC)—the AAOC offers advising and enrollment services via email and/or phone. Approximately 500 e-mails per year are received from the link on the AAOC

website. Another link, “I need help with...,” provides both hyperlinks and office phone numbers for various campus services. The AAOC coordinates the College Success (ORIE 1002) course and the Assistant Dean for Distance and Adult Education teaches a section just for distance learners. The primary academic support/tutoring provided for distance-education students is provided by the online tutoring program “Smarthinking” and is accessed through the current student webpage. Students also may e-mail term papers for editing and review to the SE Writing Center; the student must be willing to have a phone conference with the reviewer to cover the proposed revisions.

Native American Center for Student Success (NACSS)—this center provides services to students at a distance from all tribes and states; these are listed on the NACSS website. Service styles are both face-to-face and distance. Native American students may be enrolled by phone after confirming their admission to the University through Campus Connect. Students who are tribal members are referred to the website of their tribe for financial assistance in relation to college expenses.

University Recruitment—the General Scholarship Application and associated information are available online. All recruitment publications provide website and links to scholarship information.

Library—the library currently maintains 77 databases, including: The American Chemical Society, ABI Inform, BioOne, Ebscohost, Gale Literature Recourse Center, JSTOR, Lois Law, MLA, PsycArticles and PsycInfo. Databases may be accessed via the internet and cover full-text journals, reference tools, electronic books, case studies, industry reports and annual reviews, newspapers, and book reviews. Also available is Sirsi, the electronic library catalog, which lists print and electronic books, US Government and Oklahoma State Documents. Faculty, staff, and students also have access to interlibrary loan services. Students enrolled in College Success (ORIE 1002) are placed in the *Library Orientation* Blackboard course which includes general research and library use tutorials and documents accessible from any internet-connected computer regardless of time or location. The library website contains a variety of research and library instructional documents, tutorials, and research guides.

In most instances, students requesting services provide direct feedback to staff when issues arise and these are addressed as soon as possible. We believe this has resulted in the high level of student satisfaction documented using the ACT College Outcomes Survey (COS), ACT Student Opinion Survey (SOS), and a locally-developed Junior Survey. For example, 86.2% on the COS students were satisfied or very satisfied with Southeastern in general; high levels of student satisfaction also were noted for specific areas such as academic advising (78.5% satisfied or very satisfied), library (78.5%), and access to computer facilities and services (76.7%). Similar levels of satisfaction were documented by SOS (Academic Advising—84.2% satisfied or very satisfied; library services—80.6%; computer services—75.9%). Even though high levels of satisfaction are reported, these data have not been disaggregated by type of student (traditional, distance education, mix of traditional and distance education). The academic and student support units will develop processes for existing surveys, or additional surveys, which will allow for a more detailed analysis of level of satisfaction of traditional and distance-education students during 2012-13 AY. These changes in assessment will be submitted to the appropriate committees/councils (e.g., Distance Education Council, Institutional Assessment Committee, Human Subjects Research Review Committee) for review and approval prior to implementation.

30. How does the institution measure and promote interactions among distance delivery students and faculty (e.g., email, online chats, discussion groups, phone or streaming audio, “office hours,” cyber buddies/mentors and tutors)?

The following measures are the most common means used to promote interactions: e-mail, chat rooms, discussion boards, blogs, journals, phone, virtual office hours, e-librarian program, student IT help desk, CIDT help, and IT support for faculty. A survey of students in online and blended classes during Fall Semester 2011 revealed that “instructors encouraged questions and/or interactions” (82.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed), “the instructor responded to correspondence in a timely manner” (84.8%), and “the instructor gave feedback on graded material in a timely manner” (87.5%).

31. How does the institution assure that the distance delivery students it enrolls and to whom it awards credit and credentials are the same ones who did the work and achieved the institution’s learning goals (student

authentication)?

Southeastern assigns a unique username and password to each student enrolled in the online LMS and uses automated scripts to upload and enroll students in the LMS (Blackboard 9.1 Enterprise) from the main Student Information System (POISE). Students must login using their username and password for university-provided technology/services (e.g., e-mail, Campus Connect [advising records, transcripts, financial aid, billing], Blackboard, library resources).

32. How does the institution protect student identity and personal information?

Southeastern maintains numerous electronic resources that are continually evaluated to insure the proper level of security is applied and that institutional resources are allocated based on the level of risk the institution is willing to accept for them. Most security measures are designed to mitigate risk for multiple systems and will easily extend to protect future resources and systems. Measures to mitigate the risks related to maintaining critical information system resources include:

- Acceptable Use Policies
- SIS User session recordings & logging
- Virus & Spam scanning
- Network firewalls
- Network monitoring
- Automatic logouts
- SSL encryption (including SSH & SFTP)
- Vendor support contracts for security appliances
- Annual Risk Assessment with continuous improvement
- Quarterly Vulnerability Scans on SIS (PCI Compliant)
- Staff Training (Ex: On campus CISSP Boot camp)
- End User IT Security Training
- Restricted Physical Access to Data Sensitive Locations (e.g. server room)

Part 8. Evaluation and Assessment

33. How does the institution assess, review, and evaluate quality in distance-delivered offerings?

Assessment of teaching and learning has a long tradition at Southeastern using well-established guidelines that apply to all programs regardless of the mode of delivery. All undergraduate and graduate programs submit an annual program outcomes assessment report (POAR). POARs are prepared by departmental faculty and department chairs. A separate POAR also is submitted for the general education program; this report is a collaborative effort of faculty, department chairs, the General Education Council, and the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs—Student Learning and Accreditation. Departments are requested to respond to the following questions as part of the report:

- Does the program have any distance education courses (IETV or web-based)?
- What assessment techniques will be used to compare achievement of learning outcomes between students in face-to-face versus distance education courses.
- If no face-to-face section is available for comparison, detail what unique techniques will be used to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes in a distance education environment.

All POARs are submitted to the Dean of Instruction for review and approval. The Dean then forwards all POARs to the Office of Academic Affairs. The Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs—Student Learning and Accreditation convenes the Institutional Assessment Committee to review and evaluate each POAR. The Dean and Department Chairs are provided results of this evaluation and specific comments to share with departmental faculty.

34. How are the measures and techniques the institution uses for distance-delivered offerings equivalent to those used to assess and evaluate traditional offerings? If there are differences, why are these differences appropriate?

The measures and techniques used to evaluate distance-delivered offerings are equivalent to those used

for assessment of traditional offerings. One additional tool used exclusively in distance-education offerings is “Evaluation Kit Online Assessment.”

35. How does the institution assess the learning of the students it educates in its distance-delivered offerings to ensure that they achieve the levels of performance that the institution expects and that its stakeholders require?

All program graduates are held to the same level of performance regardless of the mode of delivery. The focus of Southeastern's distance-education programming has primarily been to better serve students enrolled at our additional locations by supplementing the traditional courses offered at the site with courses via IETV and the internet. Because no undergraduate program is offered exclusively via distance delivery, students can graduate from Southeastern in the same program with markedly different mixes of traditional and distance-education courses in general education as well as in the major and minor (or second major). Similar mixes of traditional and distance-education courses are also found in most graduate programs. To address the issue of what happens in practice vs. theory for distance-education programming, we are implementing a new level of assessment that will identify our actual vs. potential distance-education programs; this process will be fully implemented by the 2013-14 academic year. Each year, the percentage of coursework completed traditionally and through distance delivery will be calculated for all graduates; from these data, programs will be placed into 1 of 3 categories: (1) no program graduates met the 50% threshold of distance education; (2) program graduates included both those that met the 50% threshold and those that did not meet the 50% threshold; and (3) all program graduates met the 50% threshold of distance education. For categories 1 and 3, no overall comparisons of performance can be made between traditional and distance-education program graduates (no student graduated in the other category). Assessment will focus on ensuring student achievement and success are equivalent in for all courses (including general education) offered by both delivery methods. For category 2, overall comparisons of student performance also will be made between traditional and distance-education graduates.

There is a paucity of discipline-specific distance-education courses in many programs; therefore, most students must complete a substantial amount of their general education via distance delivery to reach the 50% threshold. Further, number of unique combinations of traditional and distance-education courses taken by students precludes meaningful comparisons. Therefore, the 3 categories mentioned above will be used in the analysis of mid-level assessment data (ACT CAAP Tests—Writing Skills, Reading, Quantitative Reasoning, Essay, Critical Thinking, and Science Reasoning). Results from these 6 tests will be compared among the 3 categories to assess whether delivery mode impacted student performance.

Once an area of concern has been identified during the review process, either at the course or program level, that is attributed to delivery method, this information will be provided to the department chair and faculty. They will then develop an action plan to address the issue, monitor the success of the modification, and report results in the next assessment cycle.

36. How does the institution encourage and ensure continuous improvement of its distance-delivered offerings?

Southeastern promotes a strategy of continuous quality improvement by implementing modifications identified during the evaluation of the POARs, program review process, and maintenance/achievement of specialized accreditation. The following activities also are used to promote continuous improvement:

- Faculty development grants
- Workshops and seminars offered through CIDT
- LMS training and retraining
- Research and Best Practices shared among DEC and faculty teaching distance-delivery courses
- Mentor program with DEC members and new adjunct and full-time faculty teaching distance-delivery courses
- Technology upgrades funded both internally through distance-delivery course fees and externally through grant sources