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Executive Summary

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Internet Course Exchange (WICHE ICE)

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Internet Course Exchange (WICHE ICE) is designed by WICHE and WICHE ICE member institutions to facilitate sharing distance-delivered courses among institutions. The goal of WICHE ICE is to benefit students through increased access to courses and programs in a variety of disciplines while they continue their interactions with the faculty and advisors of their home institution without interruption.

WICHE ICE honors each institution's practices for scheduling courses, enrolling students, recording student performance, and assessing the effectiveness of courses. This operations manual, designed by WICHE ICE members, provides the necessary standardized policies and procedures for all members using this method for course exchanges. The defining characteristics of the WICHE ICE policies and procedures contained in this manual include:

1. Students have expanded opportunities to select and access high-quality courses and programs from the institutional members. Students, with the recommendation of their advisors, enroll at their home institutions in courses that are taught by faculty in the other member institutions.
2. Each WICHE ICE exchange involves three parties:
 - a. The teaching institution that provides the course in a distance format.
 - b. The enrolling institution that enrolls the student into the exchanged courses (the enrolling institution is ultimately responsible for the WICHE ICE course).
 - c. WICHE, the central agent serving all of the institutions and the students involved in exchanges by enabling transactions and by providing for advising, marketing, and record keeping.
3. Member institutions agree to share essential information and adopt common mechanisms whereby faculty and other academic advisors from the student's enrolling institution may effectively participate in the evaluation and selection of courses from teaching institutions. Courses meet all standards for quality in design, content, delivery and effectiveness. All WICHE ICE institutions must be regionally accredited.
4. Processes adopted at member institutions allow students to enroll in exchanged courses in the same manner as they do for courses offered by their home institution.
5. The consortium is managed by the members through representation on a steering board, and a thoughtful business plan provides for longevity and stability of the collaborative processes.

WICHE ICE presents numerous advantages over current transfer arrangements for students, faculty, and institutions.

1. Students benefit through:
 - a. Improved access to advising and faculty guidance in the selection of exchanged courses, available through distance technologies at their home institutions.
 - b. More straightforward access to student services and financial aid.
 - c. Access to applicable courses for students displaced by (1) degree- or-work related travel (military deployment, internships, clinical experiences, etc.); (2) enriching experiences

- (volunteer, international travel, etc.); or (3) local disaster or disruption of service (hurricane, earthquake, fire, terrorist activity).
- d. Expanded access to quality course offerings in academic areas where resources constrain the development and delivery of select subject matter.
2. Faculty benefit through opportunities to collaborate, resulting in:
 - a. Enhanced educational experiences and courses available to students in their majors.
 - b. Increases in shared courses and programs between institutions.
 - c. Increased sharing of successful experiences and methods of instruction.
 3. Institutions benefit by increasing their ability to:
 - a. Balance the supply and demand for courses, and solve immediate short-term needs for particular courses.
 - b. Respond to workforce demands, especially those that quickly materialize.
 - c. Provide critical enrollments for otherwise undersubscribed programs.

Active engagement in WICHE ICE is expected to have positive effects on student retention and time to degree.

The majority of this operations manual focuses on the exchange of individual courses, and this is also the mechanism by which the sharing of programs among institutions will be conducted. However, program exchanges require additional arrangements that may be discipline- or level-specific, as well as additional accreditation or approvals from external agencies.

The appendices of this manual provide sample documents for WICHE ICE, such as the memorandum of agreement between WICHE ICE and institutions, procedures for joining WICHE ICE, a detailed course record form, and more information regarding student agreements and student services. They also include a growing repository of resources for those engaged in course or program exchanges.

WICHE ICE Mission and Guiding Principles

MISSION: WICHE ICE is a consortium of accredited colleges and universities that creates opportunities for students to access high-quality distance courses and programs through a collaborative, sustainable model that supports faculty and participating institutions.

Guiding Principles

The following principles guide the activities of all institutions participating in WICHE ICE collaborative course and program exchanges and transfers.

1. Students' opportunities for quality instruction, accessibility to courses and programs in a variety of disciplines and flexibility in delivery are central considerations for partners.
2. All essential student services are provided and accessible by the enrolling and teaching institutions.
3. All participating institutions are accredited by one of the following: Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges; Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities; or the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Institutional members from outside of the WICHE region must be accredited by a regional accreditation organization acceptable to the program director and steering board.
4. Institutional members share equal standing and are accorded trust and respect.
5. Faculty and administrative interaction and collaboration among member institutions are promoted.
6. Policies and procedures of member institutions are honored by the consortium and are the foundation for and used to support WICHE ICE transactions.
7. To enable proper course selection and ensure academic quality and accountability, partnering institutions have access to a defined set of information for shared courses and programs. This includes information regarding their academic offerings, student services, and administrative processes needed by the enrolling institution to make informed judgments regarding course and program suitability for inquiring students.
8. Long-term plans for course offerings, designed to establish stable and predictable scheduling of courses and programs, are developed as feasible.
9. Institutional advising and marketing are used to communicate to students about opportunities for enrolling in exchanged courses.
10. The WICHE ICE consortium is governed by the steering board, which is composed of one representative from each member institution or a representative from a system member. The steering board governs according to the WICHE ICE bylaws (see Section II).
11. Evaluation of financial, administrative, and academic processes and of ICE status and challenges are conducted regularly.
12. Centralized coordination functions performed by WICHE are designed to facilitate the exchange of courses and programs, increase the number of participating students, and provide

support to the teaching and enrolling institutions in the instructional and administrative tasks associated with the exchange.

13. Policies and procedures to resolve conflicts among WICHE ICE institutions will be established by the steering board.

A. Intent of these Guidelines

These guidelines have been created as a cooperative effort to inform and assist institutions in WICHE ICE. They describe the formation and governance of the consortium and the accepted policies and common processes that enable course and program exchanges. These policies and processes are intended to be observed for interinstitutional activities and are not intended to replace or supersede the policies of any institution or its governing board.

Where there is conflict between these guidelines and other policies or standards, the program director has the authority to approve temporary operating procedures that differ from these. Such conflicts and approved deviations are then brought to the attention of the steering board, with recommendations for their resolution.

B. Definitions

Course and program exchanges: Defined in Section I.

Course transfers: The consortium promotes course transfers among member institutions. These follow institutional guidelines for transfer of academic credit but also may involve special arrangements. These arrangements may include: early review and determination of applicability by faculty in the enrolling institution; special enrollment status or tuition and fee arrangements for students from WICHE ICE member institutions; sharing of course and program information among members; or other special arrangements that are beneficial to the students or the participating institutions.

Program director: Employed by WICHE and appointed by the executive director of WICHE, the program director is responsible for directing and supporting the consortium. The program director helps to set the goals, outcomes, policies, and structure for the consortium and is actively involved in consortium governance. The program director advises and reports to the WICHE ICE Steering Board on matters of regional and national interest and communicates with governmental and accreditation agencies, as agreed to by the steering board.

Project coordinator: Employed by WICHE and appointed by the executive director of WICHE, the project coordinator is responsible for implementing the policies and processes of the consortium and assisting institutional members in the exchange of courses and programs.

Steering board: Composed of representatives from the member institutions and systems, the steering board sets policy and direction for the consortium and works with WICHE to achieve consortium goals. The steering board operates according to the bylaws found in Section II.

Enrolling institution: The institution where the student enrolls.

Teaching institution: The institution delivering the course and paying the faculty member.

Section I. Establishment of the WICHE ICE Consortium

A. Establishment of Consortium

The WICHE ICE Consortium is formed and governed by the mutual agreement of the members. Its primary purpose is to serve the students enrolled at the member institutions by providing the administrative means, instructional support, and, where appropriate, standards of performance for course and program exchanges among the members.

1. Description of Course and Program Exchange

- a. Course exchange – Course exchanges provide benefits not only to students but also to faculty, academic advisers, administrators, and others. Students benefit from this exchange by receiving reliable advice in course selection, transferability, or applicability to an academic program. Students do not experience breaks in admissions, enrollment status, or financial aid issues emanating from enrollment in multiple institutions. The benefits for faculty, staff, and academic advisers include the availability of a depth and range of course information to make decisions with confidence in assignment of course credits to students' academic programs. Established contacts in the teaching and enrolling institutions will assist in determining applicability of content, as well as alignment of outcomes and results of assessment of student performance. For administrators and enrollment-services personnel, course exchanges provide clear guidance about the credits to be awarded and program applicability prior to student enrollment. Appropriate internal policies and procedures, once established, make exchanged course enrollments and records nearly transparent to students and staff alike.
- b. Program exchange – Institutions will admit students and award certificates or degrees in certain programs with graduation requirements that are met, at least in part, by coursework from other accredited institutions. These arrangements are level- and discipline-specific and may deal with program accreditation or agency approvals that go beyond institutional accreditation. Details of these exchanges are negotiated, recorded, and submitted to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and to the institution's governing boards as part of regular program approvals. While many of the administrative and academic procedures that are instituted for the course exchanges are useful in the process, the agreements among institutions that establish program exchanges deserve and require individual crafting, review, and approvals.

2. Administrative Structure

The activities of the consortium are administered on three levels: (1) the steering board; (2) the institutional campus teams; and (3) WICHE. Each has specific areas of responsibility, as described in Section II.

3. Activities Supported

- a. Course exchanges and transfers – described above.
- b. Program exchanges and transfers – described above.
- c. Faculty and administrative development and consultation opportunities – These are provided by consortium members and WICHE staff to clarify or encourage the use of exchanged courses and programs in support of the consortium mission. Professional development opportunities pertaining to WICHE ICE course and program exchanges for faculty and staff members, such as faculty seminars to develop program exchanges, will be arranged according to priorities established by the steering board.
- d. Advocacy and promotion of the consortium – Activities include course and program marketing by WICHE and by each institution; reporting (to colleagues, administrators and governance bodies) the accomplishments of the consortium; and responding to requests for information and reports.

B. Consortium Membership

Membership is voluntary and renewed on an annual basis. Initial membership must be affirmed through a memorandum of agreement executed by an institutional executive and recorded in the WICHE files. Institutional and system members are voting members of the steering board; affiliate members are not.

1. Membership Categories

- a. Institutional members are accredited institutions that may directly participate in course or program exchanges. Institutional members from outside of the WICHE region may be accepted into the consortium upon the recommendation of the program director and a majority approval by the steering board. Initial application for institutional membership is reviewed by the program director, who issues preliminary, temporary acceptance based on criteria determined by the steering board (e.g., accredited institution; interested in course or program exchange; willing to abide by principles and fulfill responsibilities of membership; has made proper application). Final acceptance is completed by a majority vote of the steering board at their next regularly scheduled meeting.
- b. System members represent statewide higher education governing or coordinating boards of accredited institutions or the governing body or agency of a group of institutions within a state. They are usually characterized by their authority to administer, coordinate, and distribute resources. They are normally not separately accredited and independently may not offer either courses or academic programs. Initial application for system membership is reviewed by the program director, who issues preliminary, temporary acceptance based on criteria determined by the steering board. Final acceptance is completed by a majority vote of the steering board at their next regularly scheduled meeting.
- c. Affiliate members are accepted into the consortium by vote of the steering board, for purposes detailed in a proposal from a sponsoring institutional or system member. Affiliate members may participate in all aspects of the consortium except governance (voting).

2. Procedures for Members

- a. Application – Institutions or systems may indicate their interest in joining the consortium by contacting the program director or through the sponsorship of any of the consortium members. Membership is confirmed with the recording by WICHE of a signed memorandum of agreement from the institution.
- b. Participation – Institutional members are encouraged to participate in course and program exchanges, as described in Section III of this document. Institutional and system members are also encouraged to participate in the governance of the consortium, as described in Section II of this document.
- c. Dissociation (voluntary) – Members may voluntarily dissociate themselves from the consortium by communicating their desire to do so to the program director in a letter or memorandum signed by an institutional executive. Membership fees will not be returned. Remaining instructional, administrative, and financial obligations of the withdrawing institution will be fulfilled prior to the completion of the dissociation. Notice of intent to dissociate will be given at least one year in advance of termination of membership.
- d. Dissociation (involuntary) – If circumstances warrant, the consortium may remove from membership any institution that chooses not to fulfill its consortium responsibilities (listed below). Involuntary dissociation will be considered upon the recommendation of the program director, who will specify the reasons to consider removal. Involuntary dissociation from the consortium will occur only with a majority vote of the steering board at a regularly scheduled meeting. The institution in question will be given at least six months to satisfy the responsibilities or respond to the reasons cited in the recommendation.

3. **Member Responsibilities**

Consortium members recognize the continuing need to:

- a. Adhere to the guiding principles of the consortium.
- b. Abide by the institution's own and the system's policies and procedures.
- c. Assume responsibility for the quality of design and delivery of shared courses and programs.
- d. Abide by accreditation standards and best practices for distance education.
- e. Inform and obtain appropriate approvals from institutional and system governing board members.
- f. Enable the exchange of courses and programs between their institution and members of the consortium through establishment of appropriate local controls and promotion of exchanged courses and through coordination with the project coordinator and other members of the consortium.
 - i. Establish and publish local policies and procedures in all areas involved in WICHE ICE activities.
 - ii. Identify knowledgeable contacts in enrollment, IT, student services, administrative services, and academic areas impacted by course exchanges.
- g. Communicate information and coordinate activities with campus faculty, administrators and WICHE.
- h. Pay annual membership dues.
- i. Bear the cost of any activity, project, or program undertaken by the institution through WICHE ICE that is not specifically funded by a membership fee, contract, grant, or other support (e.g., travel to meetings, costs associated with program exchanges, faculty salaries to teach courses).
- j. Appoint an institutional member to the steering board.

C. Dissolution of Consortium

1. Mechanism – The WICHE ICE consortium remains in effect as long as two or more institutions and WICHE agree to continue.
2. Curricular consequences – Institutions will honor their obligations to students who are already enrolled in exchanged courses or programs regardless of the status of the consortium. Institutional policies for offerings and completion times will apply.
3. Financial consequences – Institutions will honor their financial commitments that were incurred through their participation in the consortium. Upon dissolution of the consortium, any remaining funds in the WICHE ICE account become available to the executive director of WICHE for distribution at his or her discretion, with the expectation that the highest priority will be to satisfy the financial obligations incurred because of consortium activities.
4. Personnel – Personnel involved in consortium activities will be accommodated in accordance with the policies of their employing units.
5. Archiving of records – Student records for exchanged courses and programs will be maintained by WICHE for a period of five years after the course is offered or five years after dissolution of the consortium – whichever occurs earlier. These will be made available to students and participating institutions according to policies developed and published by WICHE.

Section II. Management of WICHE ICE Consortium

A. Preamble

The consortium is managed to:

1. Promote collaboration among faculties, administrators, and students to advance the common goals of higher education and promote access to high-quality academic offerings.
2. Preserve the autonomy, integrity, and quality of each member institution.
3. Share ideas, techniques, methods, courses, and programs for the benefit of enrolled students.
4. Comply with standards and best practices of learning organizations for efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability.

B. Organization of Consortium

The operations of the consortium are managed on three levels.

1. **Steering Board**

The consortium is governed by a steering board, made up of representatives from the member institutions, systems, and consortia. This board sets policies and establishes the required common procedures that must be consistent for all members of the consortium to allow the inter-institution exchanges to occur. The board informs and advises the member institutions; establishes a business plan that allows sustainable operations; reviews and evaluates overall operations and efficiencies; and directs the participation of WICHE and the member institutions to accomplish the published goals of the consortium. The board conducts its business in accordance with the bylaws detailed below.

2. **Institutional Members (services to students enrolled in exchanged programs or courses)**

Campus teams at each participating institution manage the development and delivery of courses and programs; the recruitment and enrollment of students; the assignment and compensation of faculty; and the provision of technology, library and other services for enrolled students. These tasks are managed in a manner that is consistent with institutions' own operational procedures and with the goals of the consortium. Campus teams also record academic progress and achievement, collect and distribute course revenues, and evaluate the success of the exchanges. Campus teams are guided by the principles of the consortium and comply with the policies of their individual institutions and their governing bodies. Campus teams normally include faculty, staff, and administrators who must act or approve actions to accomplish the goals of the exchange. Their responsibilities are discussed in more detail in Section III of this document.

3. **WICHE (central coordination and facilitation)**

WICHE performs essential coordination and support roles for the consortium. These include maintaining official documents (operating procedures, bylaws, agreements, official communication, meeting agenda, minutes of meetings and conferences, etc.); serving as a communications focus for consortium members; maintaining records of course exchanges offered, accepted, and completed; maintaining and distributing records of student grades in exchanged courses to enrolling institutions; managing the finances of the consortium; supporting the steering board in regular operations and initiatives that may occur; and pursuing external funding.

The program director provides input into the direction and activities of the consortium through membership on the steering board. The project coordinator provides for the organization, data, communications, and processes required to allow effective operations of the course and program exchanges undertaken. The program director and project coordinator are both assigned duties related to the consortium and evaluated by the executive director of WICHE. The executive director of WICHE seeks and considers input from the WICHE ICE Steering Board and executive committee members when evaluating WICHE employees assigned to assist with WICHE ICE or its activities.

Further detail on the role of WICHE is found in Section III of this document. Descriptions of duties of key personnel, full details on organizational responsibilities, and reference to WICHE operational procedures are available directly from WICHE.

C. Steering Board Bylaws

The steering board is responsible for the overall policy, direction, and assessment of WICHE ICE, including recommendations for membership or new programs. The steering board advises the program director concerning the implementation of policy; approves and funds activities; and promotes collaboration, scholarship and professional development of participants.

1. Actions and Documents

The board reviews and approves actions and documents including:

- Mission, principles, policies, bylaws, common procedures, goals, and strategic plans for the consortium – initial and amended versions.
- Annual goals and workplan, to include the business and marketing plans for WICHE ICE; outcomes and annual goals related to new course exchanges and member institutions; plans for external funding; new suggestions for ways to share information among institutions and facilitate the exchange of courses and/or programs; and other materials to strategically direct the growth and development of WICHE ICE.
- Establishment of membership fees and dues, and consortium budgets.
- Financial reports and plans, including an annual operating budget and reports of expenditures. Revenue generated by membership dues, course fees, and external funding will be distinguished in the budget.
- Grants and contracts for the consortium.
- New programs and new members.
- Formation and charges for committees.

2. Members

- a. Steering board members – Each institutional, system, and consortia member provides one representative to serve on the steering board. A steering board member should have knowledge of academic programs, the distance education program, and the member institution's or system's policies and procedures for offering courses at a distance. Members are expected to help direct or enable course and program exchanges within their own institutions, as outlined in the operations manual. Steering board members are not compensated by the consortium.
- b. Steering board officers – The members of the steering board shall elect among themselves by simple majority vote a chair, vice chair/chair elect, liaison to the Western Academic Leadership Forum (WALF), and two at-large members. WALF is a group of provosts and vice presidents of academic affairs at master's- and doctoral-granting institutions in the 15 WICHE states, for which WICHE serves as secretariat. The officers shall be elected at the

annual meeting and shall hold office until their successors are elected and qualified. If the elected vice chair is willing to serve as chair for the coming year, that transition will be automatic and not included in the election.

Unless circumstances intervene, elections will be held for vacant steering board executive committee positions (chair, vice chair and liaison to WALF) each spring at the scheduled steering board general meeting. If the meeting is not held, or if elections are not practical at the meeting, the election will be conducted by email or facsimile correspondence by WICHE staff. Under no circumstances will more than 24 months pass without elections being held.

- c. Vacancies – Each WICHE ICE member institution shall appoint a representative to fill any vacancy from its institution and provide written notice of that appointment to the program director.

3. **WICHE ICE Meetings**

- a. Quorum – A simple majority of the steering board members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at regularly scheduled meetings. Members attending by audio or video conferencing are considered to be present.
- b. Voting – All voting at meetings of the steering board shall be done in person, electronically, or via telephone at the time of the vote. Voting by proxy shall be allowed in the absence or unavailability of the designated representative. If a vote is required at a time when a meeting is not scheduled, voting shall be conducted by electronic ballot or by mail. Each WICHE ICE institutional and system member shall be allowed one vote.
- c. Every attempt will be made to reach steering board decisions by a consensual process. When consensus cannot be achieved, the issue at hand will be decided by majority vote.
- d. Steering board decisions will be made according to *Robert's Rules of Order – Newly Revised*.

4. **Steering Board Meetings**

a. Agenda

Each regular meeting's agenda will be set by the executive committee in consultation with the program director. Agendas will be available to members 30 days prior to the annual meeting. Members may submit items for inclusion in the agenda prior to that time.

Standing meeting agenda items include:

- Membership and recruitment report.
- Exchange statistics (courses, programs, enrollments, credit hours, and participation, as well as exchanges that are offered, accepted, and completed, etc.) and a record of issues encountered, their resolutions, and comments from the institutions affected.
- Financial report (consortium and course/program transactions).
- Progress report on annual workplan and goals.
- Governance, policies, and procedures – issues and updates.
- Assessment, accreditation, and quality control.
- Communications and marketing.
- Technology.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of WICHE ICE.
- Dispute resolution issues over the past year.
- Other issues and reports from ad hoc committees will be included as needed.

b. Annual meeting

An annual meeting of the steering board shall be held before the end of each WICHE fiscal year (June 30). The program director, in consultation with the executive committee, shall determine the time and place of the meeting. Notice in writing or via email shall be given to each member at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

- c. Special steering board meetings
Written notice stating the place, day, and hour of any special meetings of the steering board shall be mailed or electronically delivered to each board member not less than seven (7) days prior to any meeting. These meetings may be convened via video conference or teleconference.
- d. Meetings of subcommittees of the steering board
Subcommittee meetings are called by the committee chair, who establishes and publishes the schedule and agenda. The chair reports back to the steering board with recommended action items and proposals for any action that affects consortium members.

5. Committees

The steering board has the authority to appoint any committee or subcommittees necessary to carry out the stated purpose of WICHE ICE.

a. Executive committee

The steering board executive committee, acting as representatives of the steering board and composed of a chair, vice chair, liaison to WALF, two at-large members and past chair, will perform the following duties: The steering board chair will consult with the program director and staff to schedule and develop agendas for steering board meetings and conference calls and maintain official communication between the steering board members. Duties for the steering board chair include leading all steering board meetings and/or performing or delegating all other duties as the position may require. The steering board chair will provide general leadership and oversight of WICHE ICE policies and procedures. Vice chair/chair elect duties include performing the duties of the chair in the event of his/her absence and providing assistance to the chair. Western Academic Leadership Forum (WALF) liaison responsibilities include communication between WICHE ICE and WALF, and fostering WALF membership in the development of WICHE ICE. The program director will serve as an ex-officio voting member of the steering board and executive committee. Two at-large executive committee members shall be elected with the purpose of providing broad representation of the WICHE ICE membership on the executive committee. The past chair will provide continuity in leadership to the Steering Board executive committee.

b. Database subcommittee

The database subcommittee is currently reviewing the WICHE ICE database and helping characterize potential needs for this database. Database subcommittee members also identify resources to improve the database.

c. Other subcommittees

Other subcommittees address topics such as securing strategic opportunity funds to support WICHE ICE; identifying and convening supportive faculty members and administrators at institutions that can help advise WICHE ICE on issues related to specific institutional functions; and finalizing the memorandum of agreement between members institutions and with WICHE.

6. Steering Board Communications

Official communications of the consortium will be approved by the program director and posted on the website. Individuals and member organizations are free to publicly describe their association with the consortium; but for matters of policy, procedure, and guiding principles, each institution is asked to refer to the official site. Neither the consortium nor WICHE will engage in marketing for courses or programs in a way that presents consortium members in a competitive manner.

7. Coordination and Support for WICHE ICE

a. WICHE will provide *staffing and support* for WICHE ICE, including:

- Maintaining official documents.

- Facilitating communication between ICE members.
 - Developing and maintaining a record of course and program exchanges and their associated academic and financial transactions.
 - Processing invoices and collecting annual member dues.
 - Maintaining the WICHE ICE database, including course information and required student information, as determined by the steering board.
 - Managing the finances of the consortium.
 - Pursuing external funding.
 - Managing external and internal communications.
 - Keeping records and providing reports on the annual workplan and financial reports presented at the steering board annual meeting.
 - Assisting in evaluations of program effectiveness.
 - Recruiting consortium participants, including maintaining a list of prospective WICHE ICE members, and providing regular recruitment updates at the steering board annual meeting.
 - Maintain official documents of course and program exchanges that are offered, accepted, and completed.
- b. WICHE, acting as secretariat, will fulfill *secretarial and treasurer duties* to include the following:
- Keeping a true and complete record of the proceedings of steering board meetings. The secretariat shall attend to the giving and serving of all notices of the steering board and shall perform or delegate such other duties as the board may dictate.
 - Keeping correct and complete accounts showing, at all times, the financial condition of WICHE ICE. The secretariat shall maintain the collecting, dispersing, and holding the funds for WICHE ICE. All funds shall be deposited in accordance with WICHE guidelines. Withdrawal and investment of funds shall be consistent with procedures established by WICHE.
- c. WICHE will maintain and serve as a *repository* for WICHE ICE documents including:
- Mission and planning documents.
 - *WICHE ICE Operations Manual*.
 - WICHE ICE Steering Board members.
 - WICHE ICE Steering Board bylaws.
 - Memorandum of agreement and other agreements between WICHE ICE and member institutions.
 - Meeting agendas.
 - Meeting minutes.
 - Membership prospects and contacts.
 - Agreements with other consortia groups.
 - Consultant agreements.
 - Annual workplans and financial records.
 - Membership applications.
- d. WICHE staff will develop a *business plan* that is approved by the steering board. The business plan will identify long-term strategies for WICHE ICE growth and sustainability. WICHE staff will also prepare an annual operating plan for review of the steering board at the annual meeting.
- e. WICHE staff, with assistance and approval from the steering board, will *seek external funding* for WICHE ICE and will manage grants, including grant and budget reporting. WICHE will serve as the fiscal agent for all external funds, including grants and member dues.

8. **Communications Regarding Consortium, Including Presentations and Dissemination of WICHE ICE Materials**

WICHE staff, with support from the steering board and member institutions, will make presentations regarding WICHE ICE to interested organizations and will disseminate information about WICHE ICE to attract more member institutions and course and program exchanges.

Section III. Management of Course and Program Exchange

A. Preamble:

The internal processes and procedures used in the participating institutions to accomplish the exchange of courses and programs will differ according to the guidelines provided by their administrators and governing bodies. The policies and procedures described here are those that are common to all participating institutions, such that they define essential characteristics of the exchanges and enable them to proceed.

The policies and procedures for WICHE ICE are to be reviewed on an annual basis at the WICHE ICE annual meeting and adapted to meet the needs of member institutions. Institutions participating in program exchanges may also establish policies and procedures specific to their exchange if they are not in conflict with the existing consortia agreement. In cases of conflict, the program director has the authority to resolve the conflict and report the outcome to the steering board.

Policies and procedures are presented in tabular, semichronological form in Appendix D.

B. Course and Program Exchange Policies

1. Teaching Institutions (providing the course and paying the faculty member)

It is essential that the faculty members teaching a course have a single set of dates, policies, and expectations for all members of the class. Students in a class cannot be treated differently, and the faculty member cannot be expected to know and abide by a number of differing policies. Therefore, the policies of the teaching institution and the class rules of the instructor are the primary standards that apply to student enrollment, attendance, performance, and behavior in exchanged classes. Disputes that arise from the application of those standards are resolved using the established policies of the teaching institution.

- a. Course and program design and curriculum approvals are processed and established institutionally by the originating institutions.
- b. Assignment and compensation of faculty is accomplished according to existing policies and agreements at the teaching institution.
- c. Courses made available for exchange are entered into the WICHE ICE database by the teaching institution with the information outlined in the *WICHE ICE Course Information Guide* (see Appendix B).
- d. The teaching institution determines the price required to make that course available to other students through WICHE ICE.
- e. The teaching institution determines the number of seats available to other institutions through WICHE ICE.
- f. While enrolling institutions will usually determine whether students possess the prerequisite knowledge and skills listed in the course record, in cases of doubt (or when directed by the teaching institution), the final acceptance of students into courses is the prerogative of the teaching institution. The enrolling institution's faculty or staff will work with the faculty of the teaching institution to determine the sufficiency of student preparation. Often, the required knowledge and skills will be demonstrated through coursework at the student's enrolling institution.
- g. Students from outside of the teaching institution who are enrolled through WICHE ICE are included on the course-management record but are not recorded in the teaching institution's official enrollment records. Their courses do not appear on transcripts from the teaching institution, and their student credit hours are not reported by the teaching institution in state and federal reports in the same manner as resident students. They may be assigned an official status that allows the institution to track their numbers and progress and that allows students access to resources and services of the teaching institution. The enrolling institution receives the FTE credit for the course.
- h. Students must be afforded some official standing and follow the academic policies of the teaching institution in matters related to student performance and evaluation, behavior, and

discipline. Any actions or disputes regarding these issues are resolved using the published processes of the teaching institution.¹

- i. The academic schedules of the teaching institution apply. All other deadlines, including drop/add and refund dates, will be the dates that are normally followed by the teaching institution, once approved by the teaching institution.
- j. Faculty in the teaching institution keep and make available information that may be needed by the enrolling institution related to student performance, course effectiveness, and student services (such as the last date of attendance or participation for financial aid purposes).
- k. A faculty member's rank and status, as determined by his or her institution, are honored by all other member institutions.
- l. The requirements for and exchange of students' course evaluations can be negotiated between the enrolling and teaching institutions.
- m. The academic schedules of the teaching institution apply. This includes dates for start and end of instruction and holidays. All other deadlines, including drop/add and refund dates, will be the dates that are normally followed by the teaching institution.

2. Enrolling Institutions

- a. Enrolling institutions, using the data provided in the *WICHE ICE Course Information Guide*, determine which courses to make available to students through WICHE ICE and build local course offerings for them.²
- b. Enrolling institutions charge tuition and fees to cover their own expenses and provide the predetermined price per seat to the teaching institution. Application to students in exchanged courses of tuition waivers, tuition caps, resident credit, or other special arrangements is done at the discretion of the enrolling institution.
- c. All courses made available at the enrolling institution through WICHE ICE are identified and marketed as such. Students are made aware of the opportunities they have to access courses from other institutions and of the differences in schedules, costs, expectations and procedures associated with those courses. (See "Student Information and Policy Agreement" – Appendix C). Students agree to the sharing of course and personal information as needed to permit efficient course exchanges.
- d. The enrolling institution's admissions policies apply for any program that is supported by courses imported through WICHE ICE.
- e. Official student records of the enrolling institution show exchange courses as local institutional courses. Resident credit determinations are at the discretion of the enrolling institution, as is the applicability of a course to institutional or program requirements.
- f. The enrolling institution will determine how to translate a course grade from a teaching institution using a grading system that differs from the enrolling institution's grading system. Students should be informed by their enrolling institution how grades from teaching institutions using different grading systems will be translated by the enrolling institution prior to course enrollment. The enrolling institution will be responsible for determining the method by which students will be so informed.

3. General Policies

- a. Each student's record in exchanged courses will be uploaded onto the secure WICHE ICE database. Grades will be shared on the site, according to the agreed-upon timeline. Each institution will facilitate the exchange of information, consistent with federal regulations for the release of information. Student records for each course will include at least: the student's name and identifier (from the enrolling institution or, if necessary, assigned by WICHE); and the course description including discipline (prefix), number, credits (semester or quarter), title, catalog description, dates or term, institution, faculty of record, and final grade (see Appendix B).
- b. If additional records of student performance on specific course outcomes are needed to enable program assessment at the enrolling institution, the exchange of information will be arranged separately between the enrolling and teaching institutions.
- c. Teaching and enrolling institutions are expected to provide essential student services (see Appendix E).

- d. The refund policy and refund schedule is determined by the enrolling institution. In determining the refund policy, the enrolling institution should account for its obligations to the institutions providing exchanged courses. Teaching institutions typically will not bill for the course until after all partnering institutions' add/drop dates. Special arrangements may be made between institutions if there are considerable differences between important term dates.

C. Course and Program Exchange Procedures

These procedures are offered as an indication of activities that must occur at each institution participating in WICHE ICE. They are meant to be neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. These guidelines will be adjusted and supplemented with examples as the consortium gains experience with course and program exchanges.

Each institution is encouraged to appoint a **WICHE ICE Program Coordinator** (in addition to a steering board member) for the institution. Institutions are also urged to form a WICHE ICE implementation team, which functions in the following ways:

	Teaching Institutions	Enrolling Institutions
Administratively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puts institutional systems into place for academic support for schools/ departments wishing to share courses. This may include, for example, course-development support; the setting of course cost; invoicing and remitting payments; support for articulation agreements; marketing for courses/ programs; technical support, including course management systems (i.e., Blackboard, WebCT, etc.) for WICHE ICE students; and administrative policies for participating faculty and staff (assignment, workload, compensation, evaluation). • Ensures that students have official standing at the institution and have access to customary university resources and services listed in Appendix E. • Coordinates course record, schedules, pricing, seats offered and awarded, student data, and other required information with enrolling institution and with WICHE ICE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puts institutional systems into place for academic support for schools/ departments wishing to share courses. This may include course scheduling and marketing; the setting of tuition and fees; invoicing and remitting payments; support for articulation agreements; marketing for courses/programs; and technical support for the delivery and course-management system being used. Registrars and enrollment officers may have to decide how to list courses, how to assign local signature authority (who signs grade sheets, withdrawal forms, and other documentation that the local faculty would normally process), what characteristics of posted courses need special consideration in the course-selection process,³ how the courses will be identified in the institutional database, and what attributes will be included. • Ensures students have access to university services (see Appendix E). • Coordinates course record, schedules, pricing, seats offered and awarded, student data, and other required information with teaching institution and with WICHE ICE.

	Teaching Institutions	Enrolling Institutions
Academically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a course offering plan, and arranges for courses to be shared. • Develops course content and outcomes, establishes course level and credits, assigns faculty according to institutional policies, and, where needed, assists enrolling institutions in evaluating student preparation for courses (prerequisite knowledge and skills and access to equipment or experiences). • Assesses course effectiveness in achieving learning outcomes, and shares evidence and analysis with enrolling institutions, as arranged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluates course content, outcomes, and other characteristics. • Determines which courses to select and schedule as local sections, and determines their applicability to academic programs. • Arranges for special testing or student experiences, and evaluates student completion of prerequisites, as coordinated with the teaching institution. • Determines if assessment data (in addition to student’s final grade) is needed from the teaching institution.
Student Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to student information requests, provides access to course content and management, and ensures student access to the bookstore and to library and information services. • Provides enrolled students with access to persons and procedures for resolution of any disputes that may arise related to academic policies and expectations related to the course(s) in which they are enrolled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises and counsels students; administers financial aid; and provides normal student services with respect to placement, testing, tutoring, disability support, health, safety, insurance and appropriate activities. • Ensures student access to the bookstore and to library and information services. • Provides enrolled students with access to persons and procedures for resolution of any disputes that may arise related to administrative policies and expectations regarding their enrollment.

D. Timeline and Course Offering Plan

Institutions should give notice of courses available to share through the WICHE ICE database well in advance of the term in which they are to be taught (one year, if possible), so that institutions requesting seats will have enough time to develop an institutional plan, determine course articulation, and market courses.

E. WICHE Assistance

WICHE assists the participating institutions with:

- Initiating interinstitutional discussions and arrangements.
- Communicating and coordinating with regional accrediting agencies.
- Helping to coordinate course-offering plans for collaborative program partnerships.
- Developing and maintaining the WICHE ICE database for student and course information.
- Loading course rosters onto the WICHE ICE database.
- Advising on the adoption and use of course-management systems and the application of standards and best practices.

- Providing for the exchange of enrollment, student grades, and other data in the WICHE ICE database.
- Providing assistance as requested to teaching institutions to invoice enrolling institution for seats exchanged.

WICHE policies and procedures for supporting the course and program exchanges undertaken by this consortium are detailed in an accompanying manual.

Notes:

1. Some disciplinary actions may affect the student's status at both the teaching and enrolling institutions. For example, a serious incident of plagiarism may result in a failing grade (teaching institution) and dismissal from an academic program (enrolling institution).

2. In a given discipline, an institution may decide to select and schedule only courses that have direct equivalents in the enrolling institution's inventory, that are used in accredited programs, or that are taught on a particular schedule.

3. See note 2.

Communications regarding any aspect of these operating procedures or questions about the consortium or its activities may be directed to the program director or may be sent to WICHE ICE Steering Board members at each institution. Contact information is available on the Website.

Appendix A

WICHE ICE Procedures for Membership and Memorandum of Agreement

Membership Process

1. Institutional membership: Regionally accredited institutions located within the 15-state WICHE region* shall request membership in WICHE ICE through WICHE; shall agree to the guiding principles and policies of the consortium; and shall commit to work cooperatively with other WICHE ICE member institutions to accomplish the purpose of the consortium.
2. System membership: Systems of higher education encompassing more than one accredited institution within a state or geographical area are eligible for system membership. System membership includes a seat on the steering board and confers benefits on the system institutions, as described in the WICHE ICE financial plan.
3. WICHE affiliation: Regionally accredited institutions located outside the WICHE region may apply to join WICHE ICE. Any regionally accredited institutions requesting membership in WICHE ICE shall submit a request to the program director, who will present it at the next WICHE ICE Steering Board meeting.
4. Institutions and systems that agree to join the WICHE ICE consortium will execute a memorandum of agreement (MOA) similar to that included below. A record of all MOAs will be maintained by the program director.
5. Good standing: To remain in good standing, WICHE ICE member institutions shall post or receive seats in at least one WICHE ICE course; execute the joint responsibilities in the MOA; pay the membership fees and annual dues; and designate a representative to participate in the steering board meetings, according to the stated time frame.
6. Voluntary termination of membership: An institution may terminate its membership in WICHE ICE by submitting a letter to the chair of the steering board stating its intention to withdraw. Whenever possible, notification will be given at least one (1) year in advance of termination of membership. Some financial and curricular obligations may continue after notice of termination.
7. Involuntary termination of membership: Failure to maintain good standing due to nonpayment, nonparticipation, or other just cause shall be reviewed by the steering board and may result in the loss of membership.

* The WICHE member states include Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Memorandum of Agreement – Institutional Membership

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Internet Course Exchange (WICHE ICE)

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education’s Internet Course Exchange (WICHE ICE) is a consortium of member institutions and systems with a common set of policies, procedures, and support systems for sharing distance-delivered courses among regionally accredited institutions in the 15 WICHE member states and beyond. WICHE ICE broadens the mix of distance-delivered courses that are available to students while leveraging the resources of member institutions and systems that collaborate as WICHE ICE partners.

This Memorandum of Agreement is entered into by _____, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, and the WICHE ICE Consortium. All WICHE ICE member institutions and systems shall be entitled to all rights and support and share the responsibilities of all members who are signators to this Memorandum of Agreement.

To provide a process by which the WICHE ICE members can jointly undertake course and program exchanges and in consideration of the mutual agreements in this Memorandum of Agreement, the WICHE ICE member institutions and systems agree as follows:

I. **WICHE ICE Governance.** In accordance with the WICHE ICE Bylaws, WICHE ICE is governed by a steering board composed of a representative from each member institution and system.

II. **Funding:** Common activities of the member institutions and systems and administrative support for course and program exchanges are financed through membership fees, annual dues, course fees, grants, and donations, or some combination thereof, that are collected and dispersed in accordance with the WICHE ICE financial plan.

Each WICHE ICE member institution and system bears its own costs for any activity, project, or program undertaken by the institution or system through WICHE ICE that is not specifically funded by a membership fee, contract, grant, or other support, including course or program revenues.

III. **Administration and Management:** Each WICHE ICE member institution shall provide administrative oversight and program management of the member institution’s shared programs or courses. The consortium and the coordinated activities of the member institutions and systems shall be managed by the steering board and WICHE in accordance with the WICHE ICE Bylaws and *WICHE ICE Operations Manual*.

IV. **Joint Responsibilities:** The WICHE ICE member institutions and systems shall be jointly responsible for the interinstitutional courses and programs that they share and shall:

- A. Adhere to the guiding principles of the consortium.
- B. Abide by the institution’s or system’s own policies and procedures.
- C. Assume responsibility for the quality of design and delivery of shared courses and programs.
- D. Abide by accreditation standards and best practices for distance education.
- E. Inform and obtain appropriate approvals from institutional and system governing board members.
- F. Enable the exchange of courses and programs between their institution and members of the consortium through the establishment of appropriate local controls, the promotion of exchanged courses and programs, and coordination with the WICHE ICE Project Coordinator and other members of the consortium, including:

1. Establishing and publishing local policies and procedures for all areas involved in WICHE ICE activities.
 2. Identifying knowledgeable contacts in enrollment, IT, student services, administrative services, academic and other areas impacted by course exchanges.
- G. Communicate information and coordinate activities among institution and system faculty and administrators and WICHE.
- H. Pay annual membership dues.
- I. Appoint a member to the WICHE ICE Steering Board.

V. Intellectual Property: All discoveries, technology, know-how, trademarks, copyrights, patents, and intellectual property arising out of or in connection with an interinstitutional course or program shall be governed by the WICHE ICE member institution authoring, creating, conceiving, and reducing it to practice; shall be subject to such terms and conditions as may be contained in any agreement that the WICHE ICE member may have with the sponsors; and shall be subject to the institutional intellectual property policies of that WICHE ICE member institution or system.

VI. Term of Agreement: This agreement remains in effect for 10 years unless the institution or system is voluntarily or involuntarily separated from the consortium, according to the consortium operating procedures. Where possible, one year’s notice of intention to withdraw from the consortium will be given.

The agreement is renewable, upon the written agreement of the parties.

VII. Continuing Obligations: Some agreements to provide courses, programs, or services to students, or agreements to fund courses or other activities that are initiated through this consortium, may continue under institutional or accreditation guidelines, regardless of this institution’s association with the consortium.

By affixing the appropriate signatures to this document, _____ indicates its agreement to join the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Internet Course Exchange, according to the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement, and acceptance by WICHE and the consortium. This agreement does not create any third party beneficiaries and can only be enforced by WICHE and the parties of the Memorandum of Agreement.

Signed the ____ day of _____, 20__.

Acceptance

Printed name and title of institution’s academic officer

WICHE ICE Program Director

Signature of institution’s academic officer

Chair, WICHE ICE Steering Board

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Appendix B

WICHE ICE Course Information Guide

Course Information from the TEACHING INSTITUTION, to be posted on WICHE ICE. ENROLLING INSTITUTIONS make selections based on this information.

- Teaching Institution and Website.
- Course Prefix and Number.
- Course Title.
- Course Credits (quarter, semester, or CEU).
- Course Level – Upper or lower division, precollegiate, undergraduate, graduate, professional level, continuing education/ non-credit program.
- Campus and Course Catalog URL.
- Instructor: Name and contact information.
- Special Instructor Attributes : Such as, Nobel laureate, academically qualified by AACSB, has own TV show.
- Description of Course.
- Syllabus, including:
 - Course objectives
 - Text/readings
 - Student learning outcomes
 - Assignments
 - Schedule of content
 - How assignments are evaluated
 - Assessment processes
 - Special technology requirements
- Prerequisites: Courses and (if feasible) knowledge or skills, since course identifiers vary. If the prerequisite courses are described on a website, consider including the links.
- Delivery Method, Requirements: Software, lab materials, access to databases, technology.
- Dates: Start and end of instruction. Campus visits required. Practicum, clinical, or engagement required.
- Special Arrangements: Arrangements that students must make (e.g., make a video; give a presentation or performance; take a skills test; visit a clinical or industry site; partner with a local entity, etc.).
- Academic Contact: May be someone other than faculty available to answer course questions.
- Administrative Contact: For student policy or procedural inquiries and dispute guidance – may be one person per institution.
- Contact email: Instructor and staff supporting the course.
- IT Contact: For help desk at teaching institution.
- Contact Information: For bookstore and library of teaching institution.
- Cost per Seat: Payable to the teaching institution.
- Availability: When course is generally offered.
- Faculty Qualifications: Including information such as selling points of faculty, rank and area of research or interest, faculty experience with the media used, successes, student testimonies of course value, etc.
- Student Readiness Checklist: Experience, software, student ability with particular equipment or processes that enrolling institution should document or verify prior to enrollment in the course.
- Available Seats, by Semester:
 - Term
 - Section
 - Instructor
 - Seats (number available)
 - Credits
- Enrollment Limitations.
- Other Important Information.

Appendix C

Sample Form (based on form from University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA))

Student Information and Policy Agreement

For UAA students enrolling in courses offered through the WICHE ICE Consortium

Course Information

UAA is a member of a consortium of accredited institutions of higher learning in the Western United States called the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education Internet Course Exchange – WICHE ICE. The members of the consortium have developed courses that may be delivered using various technologies to many locations within the WICHE region. If you elect to register for one of those courses, you must be aware of the following information and agree to the policies that govern the course delivery.

Registration

The course, _____ (UAA Subject, Number, Title and Section) _____, is presented as a UAA offering for credits. You may register for the course through the usual UAA registration process, paying all tuition and fees in the process. Special discounts and tuition waivers may not apply to this course. Registration and enrollment deadlines and course start and end dates are listed in the UAA online schedule and may differ from other UAA offerings. Since you will be enrolling as a UAA student, you are responsible for adhering to the established policies and procedures found in the UAA catalog and student handbook. There are, however, certain academic policies and procedures of the teaching institution, listed below, that take precedence.

Delivery

This course is delivered by _____ (the Teaching Institution) _____, an accredited institution and member of the WICHE ICE consortium. The course instructor has supplied a syllabus, available at _____, which includes course topics, the schedule of activities, student expectations, student learning outcomes, evaluation criteria, and contact information. It is your responsibility to contact the course instructor and comply with the requirements and the schedule of the course. It is also your responsibility to comply with the academic policies of the teaching institution in areas such as academic integrity, course performance, and behavioral standards. Evaluation of your performance and computation of the grade in your course is the responsibility of the instructor of record and the teaching institution. Any dispute regarding process or content of that evaluation is subject to the review policies of teaching institution.

Student Services

- General UAA services available to any UAA student in your status are available to you.
- Library services will be provided by both UAA and the teaching institution. Access to online and other library services at the delivery institution will be arranged through the course instructor.
- IT services will be provided by both UAA and the teaching institution. Regular student access to the UAA network, email, and information services will follow your course registration. The IT staff and help desk at UAA will assist in technology issues associated with this course delivery that are under the control of UAA. Departmental and IT staff at the delivering institution will assist with issues that they control. Contact information is available through your course instructor.

Records

Your academic record at UAA may be shared with appropriate persons from (the Teaching Institution) in order to determine sufficient academic preparation for this course. The instructor of record from (the Teaching Institution) will maintain records of your performance in the assignments and activities of the course. These records will be available for your review and the review of UAA program faculty for which this course may apply. A record of your enrollment and performance in this course will also be submitted to WICHE to facilitate transfer of that information between institutions. A copy of your course record, including your final course grade, will be maintained in the WICHE ICE database for a period of five (5) years.

The instructor of record will submit the final grade earned in the course to the UAA registrar through a mechanism established by WICHE ICE. The final grade submitted will be posted on your UAA transcript and will be used in the calculation of your overall GPA. Courses offered in this manner may be considered to be resident credit only in special circumstances that are agreed to in writing prior to the student's completion of the course.

Agreement

I agree to the policies and procedures outlined above and wish to continue my registration in the course identified.

Student Name

Date

Appendix D

WICHE ICE Processes

The WICHE Internet Course Exchange (WICHE ICE) is designed to provide students with educational opportunities through the participation and cooperation of regionally accredited institutions. The collaboration described in this operational model allows the enrolling institution (EI) and teaching institution (TI), with the support of WICHE, to enhance the availability of courses while maintaining academic quality and allowing students to continue their engagement with their enrolling campus. Most functions will be accomplished through established policies and procedures of the participating institutions. Standardization of common processes is required only when essential to accommodate student needs. Responsibilities of institutions involved in the exchange are noted below in estimated chronological order.

Task	Student	Teaching Institution	Enrolling Institution	WICHE	Process
WICHE ICE institutions determine which courses to offer, post them on the WICHE ICE database, and share course (and program) information.		Develops course and plan offerings. Determines available seats and cost recovery price. Completes WICHE ICE course data sheet with all essential information.		Hosts course information, provided on the WICHE ICE database. Markets through website to members and others, as agreed. Posts available seats.	Faculty develop and institutions approve course data sheet for each shared course. Plans may also include the availability of entire academic programs through WICHE ICE.
Students and EI indicate interest in courses.	Student makes inquiry.		Reviews WICHE ICE course offerings, selects courses, and obtains faculty approvals. Requests seats in exchange courses. Provides program, career, and course selection advice to students.	Manages seat requests via the WICHE ICE database. Records requests and awards.	Participating institutions establish an internal process of review and approval for courses available through WICHE ICE and select those that fill a local need. Review should include faculty and lead to acceptance of courses that fulfill program or general requirements. If information is needed that is not included in the WICHE ICE course record, it may be requested directly from the offering department.

Task	Student	Teaching Institution	Enrolling Institution	WICHE	Process
EI creates course, determines fees and budget for course, and informs students of requirements.		Reviews, requests and awards seats.	Builds local course section, based on exchanged course. Budgets to pay TI cost of instruction. Adds student fees to cover local costs. Advises students of available classes and special characteristics, such as: cost, schedule, interactions, travel, fees, etc.		Registrar, enrollment services, and academic units create the course at the EI with the seats awarded by the TI. Course title and number are controlled by EI. Students are informed of the course availability.
Student enrollment is registered by the TI and EI, and payment is collected.	Student enrolls, pays cost to enrolling institution.	Student appears on class roll in instructor's course-management system and in institutional database, as established by local policy.	Processes student admission into class. Collects tuition and fees.		Students and institutions agree to course-information sharing with WICHE.
Student enrollment is confirmed through the WICHE ICE database, and TI works with implications of increased enrollments.	Student contacts instructor, collects course text and materials.		Contacts TI and WICHE to confirm status of seats reserved for each course.	Records students enrolled in shared seats.	TI handles the implications of additional enrollments in courses (e.g., faculty workload and compensation), in accordance with its own established policies and practices.
Course and student services are provided by TI and EI.		Faculty member delivers course.	Provides normal learning resources for enrolled students, such as tutoring, proctoring, disability support, library access, etc.		Course delivered according to the schedule provided by the course instructor.

Task	Student	Teaching Institution	Enrolling Institution	WICHE	Process
The TI invoices the EI for the course.		At established date, invoices enrolling institution at agreed-upon-rate through WICHE.	Pays established cost per seat used to TI.	Tracks and coordinates invoicing and payment.	
Course and student assessment.		Measures and records evidence of student learning by conducting course and student assessments.			
Grades are recorded and credit determined.	Student completes class.	Provides required student records to EI.	Records student performance (grade). Designation of credit as resident or nonresident is made at the enrolling institution.	Records student enrollment and final grade for shared classes as back-up to enrolling institution. Records kept for five years.	
Grades are received by student, course assessment results are exchanged and available for EI.	Student receives grade from EI, where course completion is noted on transcript.	Provides course assessment results, captured through normal course assessment process.	Provide course assessment results to programs and departments for use in the program assessments of student learning outcomes.		Usual assessment evidence gathered in the class should be available on request to EI for use in their assessment processes.

Appendix E

DRAFT - Minimum Student Services for Teaching and Enrolling Institutions

Recommendation

Adopt the following services for distance students as a minimum standard across all campuses and learning centers.

1. **Student advising** – Academic advising is provided to students to help them select and enroll in the type of courses and programs that will meet their objectives (career and program advising, testing and placement, course advising).
2. **Access to technology** – All enrolled students should have access to the following technologies at any campus or learning center:
 - a. Fax (for submitting assignments).
 - b. Computers connected to the Internet, with appropriate software.
3. **Library access** – All enrolled students may borrow materials from the teaching institution (TI) or enrolling institution (EI) libraries, according to the circulation policies of the specific library. Proper student identification is required to check out materials. All WICHE ICE students may access licensed digital library resources or databases, using on campus Internet connections. Remote access or access from home to digital library resources requires an authorized student username and password. Exceptions would relate to the use of some databases that are restricted by licensing agreements to specific campuses.
4. **Email account** – All students registered for at least one credit hour will automatically receive an email account for the duration of the course at the EI. Accounts will be supplied as needed at the TI.
5. **Technical assistance** – Students enrolled in distance-learning courses should have appropriate avenues to obtain technical support at no extra charge for systems used to deliver their instruction. This support should take into account the way that the technical-support needs of the distance learners differ from those of on-campus learners with technical support personnel.
6. **Proctoring tests and exams** – Each campus or learning center will administer standardized tests needed for admissions or placement to distance learners and can proctor exams for distance education courses if authorized by the faculty of the providing institution. This testing service should be available free or at the same cost as for the students enrolled in on-campus courses. Hours for test proctoring will be posted and advertised.
7. **Marketing** – A link to the WICHE ICE database for distance-delivered courses will be placed on each institutional website. Program websites may list exchanged courses.
8. **Financial aid** – All students should have access to counseling about financial aid at the EI.
9. **Tutoring** – All students in distance-delivered courses should have access to tutoring (general assistance locally and course-specific assistance from the TI). Information about how to access it should be provided automatically.

Checklist for Teaching and Enrolling Institutions

The table below lists the services to be provided by the EI, TI or WICHE. Students should be made aware of services of importance to them. Some services must be provided in part by the teaching campus (TI) and in part by the enrolling campus (EI).

Institution or Campus	
Student Advising	EI for career and program advising. TI for course-specific advising.
Access to Technology	EI for infrastructure. TI for instructional platform and plug-ins.
Auxiliary Services	Bookstore, etc. – TI. Health, student life, etc. – EI.
Library Access	EI for student access. TI for online access and distance distribution.
Email Account	EI provides. TI may provide.
Technical Assistance	EI for infrastructure, and instructional platform.
Proctored Tests	EI.
Marketing	EI, TI, and WICHE.
Financial Aid	EI.
Tutoring	EI for drop-in and developmental studies. TI for course-related help.

Appendix F

Good Practices For Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs

by the
Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions and WCET (March 2001)*

Introduction

These *Good Practices* have been developed by the eight regional accrediting commissions in response to the emergence of technologically mediated instruction offered at a distance as an important component of higher education. Expressing in detail what currently constitutes good practice in distance education they seek to address concerns that regional accreditation standards are not relevant to the new distributed learning environments, especially when those environments are experienced by off-campus students. The *Good Practices*, however, are not new evaluative criteria. Rather they explicate how the well-established essentials of institutional quality found in regional accreditation standards are applicable to the emergent forms of learning; much of the detail of their content would find application in any learning environment. Taken together those essentials reflect the values which the regional commissions foster among their affiliated colleges and universities:

- that education is best experienced within a community of learning where competent professionals are actively and cooperatively involved with creating, providing, and improving the instructional program;
- that learning is dynamic and interactive, regardless of the setting in which it occurs;
- that instructional programs leading to degrees having integrity are organized around substantive and coherent curricula which define expected learning outcomes;
- that institutions accept the obligation to address student needs related to, and to provide the resources necessary for, their academic success;
- that institutions are responsible for the education provided in their name;
- that institutions undertake the assessment and improvement of their quality, giving particular emphasis to student learning;
- that institutions voluntarily subject themselves to peer review.

These *Good Practices* are meant to assist institutions in planning distance education activities and to provide a self-assessment framework for those already involved. For the regional accrediting associations they constitute a common understanding of those elements which reflect quality distance education programming. As such they are intended to inform and facilitate the evaluation policies and processes of each region.

Developed to reflect current best practice in electronically offered programming, these *Good Practices* were initially drafted by the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications (www.wiche.edu/telecom/), an organization recognized for its substantial expertise in this field. Given the rapid pace of change in distance education, these *Good Practices* are necessarily a work in progress. They will be subject to periodic review by the regionals, individually and collectively, who welcome comments and suggestions for their improvement.

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Overview to the *Good Practices*

These *Good Practices* are divided into five separate components, each of which addresses a particular area of institutional activity relevant to distance education. They are:

1. Institutional Context and Commitment
2. Curriculum and Instruction
3. Faculty Support
4. Student Support
5. Evaluation and Assessment

Each component begins with a general statement followed by individual numbered paragraphs addressing specific matters describing those elements essential to quality distance education programming. These in turn are followed by protocols in the form of questions designed to assist in determining the existence of those elements when reviewing either internally or externally distance education activities.

Good Practices and Protocols

1. Institutional Context and Commitment

Electronically offered programs both support and extend the roles of educational institutions. Increasingly they are integral to academic organization, with growing implications for institutional infrastructure.

1a. In its content, purposes, organization, and enrollment history if applicable, the program is consistent with the institution's role and mission.

- What is the evidence that the program is consistent with the role and mission of the institution including its goals with regard to student access?
- Is the institution fulfilling its stated role as it offers the program to students at a distance, or is the role being changed?

1b. It is recognized that a healthy institution's purposes change over time. The institution is aware of accreditation requirements and complies with them. Each accrediting commission has established definitions of what activities constitute a substantive change that will trigger prior review and approval processes. The appropriate accreditation commission should be notified and consulted whether an electronically offered program represents a major change. The offering of distributed programs can affect the institution's educational goals, intended student population, curriculum, modes or venue of instruction, and can thus have an impact on both the institution and its accreditation status.

- Does the program represent a change to the institution's stated mission and objectives?
- Does the program take the college or university beyond its "institutional boundaries," e.g., students to be served, geographic service area, locus of instruction, curriculum to be offered, or comparable formally stated definitions of institutional purpose?
- Is the change truly significant?

1c. The institution's budgets and policy statements reflect its commitment to the students for whom its electronically offered programs are designed.

- How is the student assured that the program will be sustained long enough for the cohort to complete it?
- How are electronically offered programs included in the institution's overall budget structure?

- What are the institution's policies concerning the establishment, organization, funding, and management of electronically offered programs? Do they reflect ongoing commitment to such programs? (See also item **1e** below.)

1d. The institution assures adequacy of technical and physical plant facilities including appropriate staffing and technical assistance, to support its electronically offered programs.

- Do technical and physical plant facilities accommodate the curricular commitments reviewed below, e.g., instructor and student interaction (2e), and appropriateness to the curriculum (2a)?
- Whether facilities are provided directly by the institution or through contractual arrangements, what are the provisions for reliability, privacy, safety and security?
- Does the institution's budget plan provide for appropriate updating of the technologies employed?
- Is the staffing structure appropriate (and fully qualified) to support the programs now operational and envisioned in the near term?

1e. The internal organizational structure which enables the development, coordination, support, and oversight of electronically offered programs will vary from institution to institution. Ordinarily, however, this will include the capability to:

- Facilitate the associated instructional and technical support relationships.
- Provide (or draw upon) the required information technologies and related support services.
- Develop and implement a marketing plan that takes into account the target student population, the technologies available, and the factors required to meet institutional goals.
- Provide training and support to participating instructors and students.
- Assure compliance with copyright law.
- Contract for products and outsourced services.
- Assess and assign priorities to potential future projects.
- Assure that electronically offered programs and courses meet institution-wide standards, both to provide consistent quality and to provide a coherent framework for students who may enroll in both electronically offered and traditional on-campus courses.
- Maintain appropriate academic oversight.
- Maintain consistency with the institution's academic planning and oversight functions, to assure congruence with the institution's mission and allocation of required resources.
- Assure the integrity of student work and faculty instruction.

Organizational structure varies greatly, but it is fundamental to the success of an institution's programs. The points above can be evaluated by variations of the following procedure and inquiries:

- Is there a clear, well-understood process by which an electronically offered program evolves from conception to administrative authorization to implementation? How is the need for the program determined? How is it assigned a priority among the other potential programs? Has the development of the program incorporated appropriate internal consultation and integration with existing planning efforts?
- Track the history of a representative project from idea through implementation, noting the links among the participants including those responsible for curriculum, those responsible for deciding to offer the program electronically, those responsible for program/course design, those responsible for the technologies applied, those responsible for faculty and student support, those responsible for marketing, those responsible for legal issues, those responsible for budgeting, those responsible for administrative and student services, and those responsible for program evaluation. Does this review reveal a coherent set of relationships?
- In the institution's organizational documentation, is there a clear and integral relationship between those responsible for electronically offered programs and the mainstream academic structure?
- How is the organizational structure reflected in the institution's overall budget?
- How are the integrity, reliability, and security of outsourced services assured?
- Are training and technical support programs considered adequate by those for whom they are intended?
- What are the policies and procedures concerning compliance with copyright law?
- How does program evaluation relate to this organizational and decision-making structure?

1f. In its articulation and transfer policies the institution judges courses and programs on their learning outcomes, and the resources brought to bear for their achievement, not on modes of delivery.

- What are the institution's policies concerning articulation and transfer? What are decisions regarding transfer of academic credit based upon?
- Is the institution internally consistent in its handling of articulation and transfer issues, or do different divisions have different policies and procedures?

1g. The institution strives to assure a consistent and coherent technical framework for students and faculty. When a change in technologies is necessary, it is introduced in a way that minimizes the impact on students and faculty.

- When a student or instructor proceeds from one course or program to another, is it necessary to learn another software program or set of technical procedures?
- When new software or systems are adopted, what programs/processes are used to acquaint instructors and students with them?

1h. The institution provides students with reasonable technical support for each educational technology hardware, software, and delivery system required in a program.

- Is a help desk function realistically available to students during hours when it is likely to be needed?
- Is help available for all hardware, software, and delivery systems specified by the institution as required for the program?
- Does the help desk involve person-to-person contact for the student? By what means, e.g., email, phone, fax?
- Is there a well-designed FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) service, online and/or by phone menu or on-demand fax?

1i. The selection of technologies is based on appropriateness for the students and the curriculum. It is recognized that availability, cost, and other issues are often involved, but program documentation should include specific consideration of the match between technology and program.

- How were the technologies chosen for this institution's programs?
- Are the technologies judged to be appropriate (or inappropriate) to the program(s) in which they are used?
- Are the intended students likely to find their technology costs reasonable?
- What provisions have been made to assure a robust and secure technical infrastructure, providing maximum reliability for students and faculty?
- Given the rapid pace of change in modern information technology, what policies or procedures are in place to keep the infrastructure reasonably up-to-date?

1j. The institution seeks to understand the legal and regulatory requirements of the jurisdictions in which it operates, e.g., requirements for service to those with disabilities, copyright law, state and national requirements for institutions offering educational programs, international restrictions such as export of sensitive information or technologies, etc.

- Does institutional documentation indicate an awareness of these requirements and that it has made an appropriate response to them?

2. Curriculum and Instruction

Methods change, but standards of quality endure. The important issues are not technical but curriculum-driven and pedagogical. Decisions about such matters are made by qualified professionals and focus on learning outcomes for an increasingly diverse student population.

2a. As with all curriculum development and review, the institution assures that each program of study results in collegiate level learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded by the institution, that the electronically offered degree or certificate program is coherent and complete, and that such programs leading to undergraduate degrees include general education requirements.

- What process resulted in the decision to offer the program?
- By what process was the program developed? Were academically qualified persons responsible for curricular decisions?
- How were “learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded” established? Does the program design involve the demonstration of such skills as analysis, comprehension, communication, and effective research?
- Is the program “coherent and complete?”
- Are related instructional materials appropriate and readily accessible to students?

2b. Academically qualified persons participate fully in the decisions concerning program curricula and program oversight. It is recognized that traditional faculty roles may be unbundled and/or supplemented as electronically offered programs are developed and presented, but the substance of the program, including its presentation, management, and assessment are the responsibility of people with appropriate academic qualifications.

- What were the academic qualifications of those responsible for curricular decisions, assessment, and program oversight?
- What are the academic qualifications of those presenting and managing the program?
- If the principal instructor is assisted by tutors or student mentors, what are their qualifications?
- Are these qualifications considered appropriate to the responsibilities of these persons?

2c. In designing an electronically offered degree or certificate program, the institution provides a coherent plan for the student to access all courses necessary to complete the program, or clearly notifies students of requirements not included in the electronic offering. Hybrid programs or courses, mixing electronic and on-campus elements, are designed to assure that all students have access to appropriate services. (See also **2d** below, concerning program elements from consortia or contract services.)

- How are students notified of program requirements?
- If the institution relies on other providers to offer program-related courses, what is the process by which students learn of these courses?
- Is the total program realistically available to students for whom it is intended? For example, is the chosen technology likely to be accessible by the target student population? Can target students meet the parameters of program scheduling?

2d. Although important elements of a program may be supplied by consortial partners or outsourced to other organizations, including contractors who may not be accredited, the responsibility for performance remains with the institution awarding the degree or certificate. It is the institution in which the student is enrolled, not its suppliers or partners, that has a contract with the student. Therefore, the criteria for selecting consortial partners and contractors, and the means to monitor and evaluate their work, are important aspects of the program plan. In considering consortial agreements, attention is given to issues such as assuring that enhancing service to students is a primary consideration and that incentives do not compromise the integrity of the institution or of the educational program. Consideration is also given to the effect of administrative arrangements and cost-sharing on an institution’s decision-making regarding curriculum.

Current examples of consortial and contractual relationships include:

- Faculty qualifications and support.
- Course material:
 - Courses or course elements acquired or licensed from other institutions.
 - Courses or course elements provided by partner institutions in a consortium.
 - Curricular elements from recognized industry sources, e.g., Microsoft or Novell certification programs.
 - Commercially produced course materials ranging from textbooks to packaged courses or course elements.
- Course management and delivery:
 - WebCt, Blackboard, College, etc.
- Library-related services:
 - Remote access to library services, resources, and policies.
 - Provision of library resources and services, e.g., online reference services, document delivery, print resources, etc.
- Bookstore services.
- Services providing information to students concerning the institution and its programs and courses.
- Technical services:
 - Server capacity.
 - Technical support services, including help desk services for students and faculty.
- Administrative services:
 - Registration, student records, etc.
- Services related to orientation, advising, counseling, or tutoring.
- Online payment arrangements.
- Student privacy considerations.

Evaluation of contract services and consortial arrangements requires a review of pertinent formal agreements. Note, for example:

- Are performance expectations defined in contracts and agreements? Are conditions for contract termination defined?
- Are there adequate quality control and curriculum oversight provisions in agreements concerning courseware?
- Are there appropriate system reliability and emergency backup guarantees in agreements concerning technology services?
- What are the provisions for protection of confidentiality and privacy in services involving personal information?
- What are the assurances concerning qualifications and training of persons involved in contact with students? These services may range from help desk to tutoring or counseling.
- Consortial agreements introduce additional elements to be evaluated:
 - How are curriculum-related decisions made by the consortium, noting the requirement that “Academically qualified persons participate fully in the decisions regarding program curricula and program oversight?”
 - Is the institution fully engaged in the consortial process, recognizing the decision-making responsibilities of shared ownership?
 - What are the financial arrangements among the parties to the consortial agreement? What are the implications of these arrangements for institutional participation and management?
 - What entity awards the certificates and degrees resulting from the consortial program?
 - What articulation and transfer arrangements are applicable to courses offered via the consortium? Did these arrangements involve specific curricular decisions by the academic structures of the participating institutions? Were they prescribed in a state or system decision?
 - To what extent are the administrative and student services arrangements of the consortium focused on the practical requirements of the student?

2e. The importance of appropriate interaction (synchronous or asynchronous) between instructor and students and among students is reflected in the design of the program and its courses, and in the technical facilities and services provided.

- What provisions for instructor-student and student-student interaction are included in the program/course design and the course syllabus? How is appropriate interaction assured?
- Is instructor response to student assignments timely? Does it appear to be appropriately responsive?
- What technologies are used for program interaction (e.g., email, telephone office hours, phone conferences, voicemail, fax, chat rooms, Web-based discussions, computer conferences and threaded discussions, etc.)?
- How successful is the program's interactive component, as indicated by student and instructor surveys, comments, or other measures?

3. Faculty Support

As indicated above, faculty roles are becoming increasingly diverse and reorganized. For example, the same person may not perform both the tasks of course development and direct instruction to students. Regardless of who performs which of these tasks, important issues are involved.

3a. In the development of an electronically offered program, the institution and its participating faculty have considered issues of workload, compensation, ownership of intellectual property resulting from the program, and the implications of program participation for the faculty member's professional evaluation processes. This mutual understanding is based on policies and agreements adopted by the parties.

- Have decisions regarding these matters been made in accordance with institutional or system processes customarily used to address comparable issues?

3b. The institution provides an ongoing program of appropriate technical, design, and production support for participating faculty members.

- What support services are available to those responsible for preparing courses or programs to be offered electronically? What support services are available to those faculty members responsible for working directly with students?
- Do participating faculty members consider these services to be appropriate and adequate?
- Does the staff include qualified instructional designers? If so, do they have an appropriate role in program and course development?

3c. The institution provides to those responsible for program development the orientation and training to help them become proficient in the uses of the program's technologies, including potential changes in course design and management.

- What orientation and training programs are available? Are there opportunities for ongoing professional development?
- Is adequate attention paid to pedagogical changes made possible and desirable when information technologies are employed?
- Given the staff available to support electronically offered programs, are the potential changes in course design and management realistically feasible?
- Do those involved consider these orientation and training programs to be appropriate and adequate?

3d. The institution provides to those responsible for working directly with students the orientation and training to help them become proficient in the uses of the technologies for these purposes, including strategies for effective interaction.

- What orientation and training programs are available? Are there opportunities for ongoing professional development? Do those involved consider these orientation and training programs to be appropriate and adequate?

4. Student Support

Colleges and universities have learned that the twenty-first century student is different, both demographically and geographically, from students of previous generations. These differences affect everything from admissions policy to library services. Reaching these students, and serving them appropriately, are major challenges to today's institutions.

4a. The institution has a commitment – administrative, financial, and technical – to continuation of the program for a period sufficient to enable all admitted students to complete a degree or certificate in a publicized timeframe.

- Do course and program schedules reflect an appropriate commitment to the program's students?
- Do budget, faculty, and facilities assignments support that commitment?

4b. Prior to admitting a student to the program, the institution:

- Ascertains by a review of pertinent records and/or personal review that the student is qualified by prior education or equivalent experience to be admitted to that program, including in the case of international students, English language skills.
- Informs the prospective student concerning required access to technologies used in the program.
- Informs the prospective student concerning technical competence required of students in the program.
- Informs the prospective student concerning estimated or average program costs (including costs of information access) and associated payment and refund policies.
- Informs the prospective student concerning curriculum design and the time frame in which courses are offered, and assists the student in understanding the nature of the learning objectives.
- Informs the prospective student of library and other learning services available to support learning and the skills necessary to access them.
- Informs the prospective student concerning the full array of other support services available from the institution.
- Informs the prospective student about arrangements for interaction with the faculty and fellow students.
- Assists the prospective student in understanding independent learning expectations as well as the nature and potential challenges of learning in the program's technology-based environment.
- Informs the prospective student about the estimated time for program completion.

To evaluate this important component of admission and retention, it is appropriate to pursue the following:

- How do potential students learn about the electronically offered program? Is the information provided sufficient, fair, and accurate?
- How are students informed about technology requirements and required technical competence?
- How are students informed about costs and administrative arrangements?
- What information and/or advice do students receive about the nature of learning and the personal discipline required in an anytime/anywhere environment?
- What criteria are used to determine the student's eligibility for admission to the program?
- What steps are taken to retain students in the program?
- What is the history of student retention in this program?

4c. The institution recognizes that appropriate services must be available for students of electronically offered programs, using the working assumption that these students will not be physically present on campus. With variations for specific situations and programs, these services, which are possibly coordinated, may include:

- Accurate and timely information about the institution, its programs, courses, costs, and related policies and requirements.
- Pre-registration advising.
- Application for admission.

- Placement testing.
- Enrollment/registration in programs and courses.
- Financial aid, including information about policies and limitations, information about available scholarships, processing of applications, and administration of financial aid and scholarship awards.
- Secure payment arrangements.
- Academic advising.
- Timely intervention regarding student progress.
- Tutoring.
- Career counseling and placement.
- Academic progress information, such as degree completion audits.
- Library resources appropriate to the program, including, reference and research assistance; remote access to data bases, online journals and full-text resources; document delivery services; library user and information literacy instruction, reserve materials; and institutional agreements with local libraries.
- Training in information literacy including research techniques.
- Bookstore services: ordering, secure payment, and prompt delivery of books, course packs, course-related supplies and materials, and institutional memorabilia.
- Ongoing technical support, preferably offered during evenings and weekends as well as normal institutional working hours.
- Referrals for student learning differences, physical challenges, and personal counseling.
- Access to grievance procedures.

Within the context of the program, the requirements of the program's students, and the type of institution, review each of the services and procedures listed above from the standpoint of a student for whom access to the campus is not feasible.

- Are the institution's policies and procedures appropriate and adequate from the standpoint of the distant student?
- If not all appropriate resources are routinely available at a distance, what arrangements has the institution made to provide them to distant students?
- Are these services perceived by distant students to be adequate and appropriate?
- Are these services perceived to be adequate and appropriate by those responsible for providing them? What modifications or improvements are planned?

4d. The institution recognizes that a sense of community is important to the success of many students, and that an ongoing, long-term relationship is beneficial to both student and institution. The design and administration of the program takes this factor into account as appropriate, through such actions as encouraging study groups, providing student directories (with the permission of those listed), including off-campus students in institutional publications and events, including these students in definitions of the academic community through such mechanisms as student government representation, invitations to campus events including graduation ceremonies, and similar strategies of inclusion.

- What strategies and practices are implemented by this institution to involve distant students as part of an academic community? By their statements and actions, do administrators and participating faculty members communicate a belief that a sense of academic community is important?
- How are the learning needs of students enrolled in electronically offered programs identified, addressed, and linked to educational objectives and learning outcomes, particularly within the context of the institution's definition of itself as a learning community.
- Do representative students feel that they are part of a community, or that they are entirely on their own?

5. Evaluation and Assessment

Both the assessment of student achievement and evaluation of the overall program take on added importance as new techniques evolve. For example, in asynchronous programs the element of seat time is essentially removed from the equation. For these reasons, the institution conducts sustained, evidence-based and participatory inquiry as to whether distance learning programs are achieving objectives. The results of such inquiry are used to guide curriculum design and delivery, pedagogy, and educational processes, and may affect future policy and budgets and perhaps have implications for the institution's roles and mission.

5a. As a component of the institution's overall assessment activities, documented assessment of student achievement is conducted in each course and at the completion of the program, by comparing student performance to the intended learning outcomes.

- How does the institution review the effectiveness of its distance education programs to assure alignment with institutional priorities and educational objectives?
- How does evaluated student performance compare to intended learning outcomes?
- How is student performance evaluated?
- How are assessment activities related to distance learning integrated into the institution's broader program of assessment?

5b. When examinations are employed (paper, online, demonstrations of competency, etc.), they take place in circumstances that include firm student identification. The institution otherwise seeks to assure the integrity of student work.

- If proctoring is used, what are the procedures for selecting proctors, establishing student identity, assuring security of test instruments, administering the examinations, and assuring secure and prompt evaluation?
- If other methods are used to identify those who take the examination, how is identification firmly established? How are the conditions of the examination (security, time limits, etc.) controlled?
- Does the institution have in place effective policies and procedures to assure the integrity of student work?

5c. Documented procedures assure that security of personal information is protected in the conduct of assessments and evaluations and in the dissemination of results.

- What procedures assure the security of personal information?
- How is personal information protected while providing appropriate dissemination of the evaluation results?

5d. Overall program effectiveness is determined by such measures as:

- The extent to which student learning matches intended outcomes, including for degree programs both the goals of general education and the objectives of the major.
- The extent to which student intent is met.
- Student retention rates, including variations over time.
- Student satisfaction, as measured by regular surveys.
- Faculty satisfaction, as measured by regular surveys and by formal and informal peer review processes.
- The extent to which access is provided to students not previously served.
- Measures of the extent to which library and learning resources are used appropriately by the program's students.
- Measures of student competence in fundamental skills such as communication, comprehension, and analysis.
- Cost effectiveness of the program to its students, as compared to campus-based alternatives.

Although not all of these measures will be applicable equally at every institution, appropriate evidence is generally available through:

- Evaluations of student performance (see 5a above).
- Review of student work and archive of student activities, if maintained, in the course of program reviews.
- Results from students' routine end-of-course and -program evaluations.
- Student surveys of overall satisfaction with the experience of electronically offered programs; surveys reflecting student cost trade-offs experienced as they pursued the program.
- Faculty surveys, peer reviews of programs, and discussion groups.
- Documentation concerning access provided to students not previously served, through a combination of enrollment records and student surveys.
- Usage records concerning use of library and learning resources, and instructor assignments that require such usage.
- Assessment of students' fundamental skills in communication, comprehension, and analysis. How have the institution's usual measures of these skills been adapted to assess distant students?
- Documentation of the institution's analyses that relate costs to goals of the program.

5e. The institution conducts a program of continual self-evaluation directed toward program improvement, targeting more effective uses of technology to improve pedagogy, advances in student achievement of intended outcomes, improved retention rates, effective use of resources, and demonstrated improvements in the institution's service to its internal and external constituencies. The program and its results are reflected in the institution's ongoing self-evaluation process and are used to inform the further plans of the institution and those responsible for its academic programs.

- How is the institution's ongoing program of assessment and improvement developed and conducted?
- Does it cover the essential categories of improved learning outcomes, retention, use of resources, and service to core constituencies?
- Does the program appropriately involve academically qualified persons?
- What are the institution's mechanisms for review and revision of existing programs and courses?
- How does program evaluation affect institutional planning?
- What constituencies are actively involved in the ongoing process of planning for improvement?
- Has the process had measurable results to date?

5f. Institutional evaluation of electronically offered programs takes place in the context of the regular evaluation of all academic programs.

- What are the administrative and procedural links between the evaluation of electronically offered programs and the ongoing evaluation of all academic programs?
- How are the respective characteristics of campus-based and electronically offered programs taken into account?

Appendix G

GOOD PRACTICES IN CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS INVOLVING COURSES AND PROGRAMS

(adopted August 1998)

by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

PREAMBLE

This statement of good practices regarding contractual arrangements has been developed by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Mindful of the increasingly diverse nature of contractual relationships in U.S. higher education, the Commission provides this document to speak to matters that deserve the scrutiny of affiliated institutions—both accredited or holding candidacy status—engaged in or planning to engage in contractual arrangements either to receive or to deliver credit-bearing courses and programs.

The Commission expects that institutions will enter into contractual relationships after giving careful attention to the scope of the arrangement and to the appropriateness of the contractual partner(s). It also expects that the goal of such arrangements is to preserve and enhance the quality of the institution's academic offerings to students. Therefore, these good practices signify the Commission's flexibility in reviewing a wide range of contractual relationships useful to the maintenance and strengthening of the quality of educational programs.

The document is structured to address first contractual arrangements among accredited entities, then adds to those other good practices to be considered in contractual arrangements with non-regionally accredited institutions, and provides yet more good practices to be followed in contractual arrangements with international entities. This document can provide guidance to institutions engaging a wide range of contractual arrangements through which an accredited institution might share in the development and delivery of courses/programs, might purchase or use courses/programs developed by accredited or non-accredited entities, and/or might contract to provide its courses/programs through an international entity. Similarly, the document should assist evaluation teams in determining the appropriateness of such contractual relationships. The Commission understands that many collaborative arrangements do not require formal contracts; these good practices can inform the development and evaluation of appropriate documents for those relationships.

The Good Practices are based on the following basic assumptions:

- A. The courses/programs involved in any contractual arrangements are consistent with the accredited institution's stated educational mission and purposes and augment the institution's mission if offered under the name of the contracting institution.
- B. The accredited institution is responsible for any activities conducted in its name.
- C. These statements of Good Practice supplement but do not supplant the Commission's stated criteria and requirements for accreditation unless exceptions are stated explicitly.
- D. The accredited institution bears the responsibility to assure that a non-accredited party to the contract does not claim for itself or imply any accredited status other than its negotiated association with the accredited institution.
- E. In developing any contractual relationship, the accredited institution also follows the Commission's policies that require prior approval of specific institutional changes.

Good Practices for Contractual Arrangements

1. Good Practices in Writing A Contract between Accredited Institutions Concerning Educational Courses/Programs.

1.a. The contract is executed by the duly designated officers of the contracting parties, each legally qualified to commit the contracting entity to a binding contract.

1.b. The contract clearly establishes

- the nature of the services to be performed by each party;
- the period of the agreement;
- the conditions under which the contract will be reviewed;
- the conditions under which the contract can be renewed;
- the conditions under which the contract can be terminated, including appropriate protection for enrolled students in such situations; and
- the venue(s) for addressing perceived breaches of the contract.

1.c. The contract explicitly defines

- educational courses, program(s), and services included in the contract;
- the institution(s) awarding the credit;
- how the faculties of the accredited entities will periodically review the courses and programs;
- how student support services necessary to the courses/program(s) will be delivered; and
- how student access to the learning resources requisite for the course/program(s) will be assured.

1.d. The contract explicitly states financial arrangements

- that specify the compensation and other considerations for the services provided by each of the parties;
- that set forth a mechanism to account for the services provided by each of the parties; and
- that meet all legal requirements for federal and state student aid programs that might be used by students or the contracting accredited entities.

1.e. The contract is

- submitted to federal and state agencies when required by regulations;

- **Good Practices for Contractual Arrangements**
- submitted to the Commission for approval when required by federal or state regulations;
- submitted, when appropriate, to the Commission as part of a requestor approval of institutional change; and
- available on request by the Commission and its teams.

2. Additional Good Practices for Contractual Arrangements with Organizations not Accredited by a Regional Institutional Accrediting Association.

- 2.a. The accredited institution's faculty has the responsibility to review and approve the content of the courses/programs, and those faculty have credentials that meet requirements of the Commission and are qualified by experience and/or training.
- 2.b. The accredited institution follows all of the procedures established by its governance structure and by the Commission for approval of the courses/programs.
- 2.c. The accredited institution not only has the contractual obligation for but also has systematic processes to assure its capacity to carry out its responsibility for oversight of:
 - advertising and recruitment,
 - admissions,
 - appointment of faculty,
 - content and rigor of courses/program(s),
 - evaluation of student work, and
 - award of credit/certificates/degrees.

3. Additional Good Practices for Contractual Arrangements with International Entities.

- 3.a. The contract follows the good practices outlined above.
- 3.b. The contract is in English and the primary language of the international contracting entity.
- 3.c. The contract specifically provides that the U.S. institution exercises appropriate oversight for the international program in conformity with the Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals and the requirements of the Commission.

Adopted by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, August 7, 1998

Appendix H

GOOD PRACTICES IN E-LEARNING CONSORTIA Developed in collaboration with NUTN

a publication of the Higher Learning Commission

PURPOSE: This document is intended to serve as a resource and guide for eLearning consortia, for institutions or agencies considering the creation of eLearning consortia, and for quality assurance agencies providing assistance to such consortia. It draws on the experiences of several professionals now engaged in making a consortium flourish, on the lessons learned from evaluating consortia, and on the comments of many who reviewed drafts of the documents.

The document was not designed to serve as quality assurance standards, although it could be of considerable use to an eLearning consortium conducting its own self-evaluation.

While an eLearning consortium can be viewed from the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders, this document uses the perspective of the consortium itself. The document:

- is meant to be applicable to a variety of eLearning consortia;
- is meant to assist people in thinking through a broad range of issues related to such a consortium; and
- is meant to highlight many of the changes of academic culture as well as management practice that healthy eLearning consortia often require.

1. CREATION OF AN E-LEARNING CONSORTIUM

In creating a consortium, the key participants engage in fundamental discussions with major stakeholders as well as write fundamental documents to define the broad goals for the consortium.

1.1. The discussions involve and result in commitments from all constituencies whose on-going support will be critical to the success of the consortium.

- 1.1.1. Governing boards of participating institutions or, when appropriate, state coordinating boards or legislatures authorize the creation of the consortium. When appropriate, any essential funding agencies demonstrate commitment to the consortium.
- 1.1.2. Many functional areas within the participating institutions—including but not limited to senior administrators, faculty, and technology professionals—engage in the discussions about and demonstrate commitment to the consortium.

1.2. The creators of the consortium document its legal and contractual structure.

- 1.2.1. By-laws, approved by the participating institutions or other stakeholders, outline the basic governance and administrative structures of the consortium and clearly identify who exercises leadership of the consortium.
- 1.2.2. By-laws identify how and by whom official records of the consortium will be maintained and made available, when appropriate, for public review.
- 1.2.3. A consistent memorandum of understanding, or some other contractual document, clearly defines the obligations of the consortium and the participating institutions, including but not limited to the financial arrangements, the keeping of students records, and the determination of academic quality.
- 1.2.4. The foundational consortium documents include provisions for adding new participating institutions and/or for dropping a participating institution for cause.

- 1.2.5. The foundational documents specify a binding process for resolution of differences.
- 1.2.6. The foundational documents establish a schedule for periodic review of the basic governance and administrative structures.

1.3. The creators of the consortium understand and fairly represent that a consortium for the delivery of electronic education and services inevitably drives change in participating institutions.

- 1.3.1. The plans for the consortium support effective distribution of organizational learning to participating institutions.
- 1.3.2. Participating institutions agree to study and, when appropriate, modify services and processes to support the consortium and the students using it.
- 1.3.3. Participating institutions understand that they will share in broader programs of self-evaluation such as benchmarking their practices with other similar consortia.
- 1.3.4. Participating institutions support focusing on continuous improvement processes to improve performance and gain better results.

2. MISSION OF THE CONSORTIUM

The consortium has essential statements of mission and goals that reflect its purposes as outlined in its foundational documents, state its commitment to support and facilitate high quality learning and training, and define briefly its intention to maintain strong collaborative relationships among the consortium, participating institutions, and other stakeholders.

2.1. The mission of the consortium is widely understood and accepted.

- 2.1.1. The statements of mission and goals have been adopted or endorsed by the participants in the consortium.
- 2.1.2. The statements of mission and goals are public and widely distributed among participants in the consortium.

2.2. The mission of the consortium enables public accountability.

- 2.2.1. The statements of mission and goals establish a foundation on which systems of accountability for the consortium can be structured.
- 2.2.2. The statements of mission and goals establish the consortium's support of using technology for effective pedagogy and enhanced student learning, and for providing access for students.
- 2.2.3. The statements of mission and goals establish the responsibility of the consortium to its participating institutions and the students using the consortium's services.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONSORTIUM

The consortium has operating policies and procedures, understood and accepted by participating institutions, that give it sufficient authority to protect the integrity of activities it supports and coordinates and to be accountable for its activities. The consortium maintains official records documenting decisions related to participating institutions and students.

3.1. The consortium sets clear standards against which its courses and services can be held accountable to participating institutions and to the public at large.

- 3.1.1. The consortium assures that appropriate performance data are collected.
- 3.1.2. The consortium issues performance reports to its participating institutions and to the public at large.

3.2. The consortium exercises responsibility for the quality of the education provided through its services.

- 3.2.1. The consortium assures that its programs and services are evaluated and improved.
- 3.2.2. The consortium can identify courses or services failing to meet the standard and require their remediation.
- 3.2.3. The consortium has the authority to withdraw inadequate courses from its offerings or terminate inadequate services provided through it.

3.3. The consortium with its participating institutions, strive to provide a transparent environment for its students.

- 3.3.1. The consortium ensures that all recruiting and admissions materials clearly and accurately represent the program and services available.
- 3.3.2. The consortium assists in creating financial aid agreements that enable the broadest range of student options for taking courses.
- 3.3.3. The consortium exercises in a timely manner the mechanisms for resolving student complaints established in its operating documents.
- 3.3.4. The consortium informs participating institutions of student complaints the consortium receives related to courses and services.

3.4. The consortium engages in planning processes necessary to ensure its long-term success.

- 3.4.1. The consortium links its programs of evaluation to its planning processes.
- 3.4.2. The consortium ensures that appropriate technical requirements are fulfilled through good management, following a technology plan, and drawing on a human infrastructure capable of supporting the technology.
- 3.4.3. The consortium has long term funding established.

3.5. The consortium supports professional development and scholarly activity.

- 3.5.1. The consortium coordinates or provides comprehensive in-service training programs for its participating institutions, using virtual environments when appropriate.
- 3.5.2. The consortium enables its participating institutions to become familiar with emerging technology tools.
- 3.5.3. The consortium budget allows for its leadership group to participate in local, regional, and national conferences.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

The consortium has clearly stated policies and procedures and well-defined decision-making structures and processes through which it identifies and fulfills its responsibilities to participating institutions.

4.1. The consortium facilitates access to programming provided by its member institutions rather than competing with them.

- 4.1.1. The consortium assures that each participating institution has access to programming from other participating institutions for its campus and its learners.
- 4.1.2. Consortium policies, financial arrangements and marketing encourage participating institutions to offer the highest quality programming.
- 4.1.3. The consortium follows processes that honor each institution's policies and procedures in approving courses and degree programs for which the institution grants credit and/or awards degrees or certificates.
- 4.1.4. The consortium and participating institution mutually agree that courses and programs facilitated by the consortium should result in student learning comparable (or superior) to that achieved on the campus.

4.2. The consortium assumes responsibility for developing policies required for effective functioning of the consortium.

- 4.2.1. The consortium assures that the financial arrangements among the consortium and its participating institutions are clearly stated.
- 4.2.2. The consortium has policies that establish the ownership of intellectual property shared with or created by the consortium.
- 4.2.3. The consortium recommends appropriate changes if participation in the consortium requires changes to existing institutional policy.

4.3. The consortium cooperates with its member institutions to develop the processes and systems necessary to accomplish its stated mission and goals.

- 4.3.1. The consortium collaborates with its participating institutions to assure that they fulfill the expectations of government agencies and third-party quality assurance agencies.
- 4.3.2. The consortium establishes procedures through which it and the participating institutions share responsibility for the quality of the education facilitated by the consortium including but not limited to instruction, academic rigor, and educational effectiveness of all learning activities.
- 4.3.3. The consortium assures that either it or its participating institutions provide appropriate faculty support services specifically related to distance education.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES TO STUDENTS

The consortium policies, the information it provides students, and the information participating institutions provide students are unambiguous in identifying where and how students have access to appropriate services. The consortium also strives to meet all requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

5.1. The consortium facilitates student success by supporting campus related efforts in academics, services and technology platforms.

- 5.1.1. The consortium is able to make a commitment to students to provide courses and programs on a dependable and timely schedule.
- 5.1.2. The consortium demonstrates a commitment to ongoing support, both financial and technical, to assure continuation of the program for a period sufficient to enable students to complete a degree/certificate offered through the consortium.
- 5.1.3. The consortium has the authority to exercise control over the information provided students about programs and services provided by or facilitated through the consortium.
- 5.1.4. The consortium places a clear emphasis on outcomes-based programming as opposed to seat-time.

5.2. The consortium ensures that tools and services are complementary to and supportive of seamless-related services and functions.

- 5.2.1. The consortium works with participating institutions to provide services—including but not limited to admissions, academic advising, tutoring—to students that are easy to access and transparent to the student.
- 5.2.2. The consortium and its participating institutions create user-friendly processes through which students have access as needed to laboratories, library resources, facilities and equipment necessary to academic success in a program or course.

5.3. The consortium supports portal related efforts and designs that are primarily driven by the needs and considerations of students.

- 5.3.1. The consortium and its participating institutions provide a transparent process through which students can register complaints about their courses or programs.
- 5.3.2. The consortium identifies and reduces the duplication of actions required of the student within the consortium.
- 5.3.3. The consortium and its participating institutions protect personal privacy by share responsibility in protecting student information from being stolen electronically.

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Appendix I

Additional Resources

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU.org)

See standards and policies directly related to distance-delivered courses and programs. Examples of relevant standards and policies in this document include:

- Standard 2.G – Continuing Education and Special Learning Opportunities.
- Policy 2.5 – Transfer and Award of Academic Credit.
- Policy 2.6 – Distance Delivery of Courses, Certificate, and Degree Programs.
- Policy A.6 – Contractual Relationships with Organizations Not Regionally Accredited.

Appendix J

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