

COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Friday, February 10, 2012

DISCUSSION ITEM B-2: Collaboration among IU Regional Campuses in Offering Distance Education Programs

Staff Recommendation

For information only.

Background

At its August 2011 meeting, the Commission for Higher Education discussed Indiana University's plan for its regional campuses (*Blueprint for Student Attainment*), and at its December 2011 meeting, the Commission discussed a joint presentation made by Indiana, Purdue, and Ball State Universities on distance education. This item is a continuation of both of these discussions, with specific reference to the proposal by IU East to deliver the B.S. in Psychology statewide via distance education technology.

While the B.S. in Psychology program raises questions related to additional distance education fees (the proposal includes an additional charge of \$30 per course), the proposal raises other important questions about distance education degrees offered by regional campuses. To its great credit, the IU *Blueprint* has numerous references to the need for regional campuses collaboration, some of which explicitly cite distance education. Page 61 of the *Blueprint*¹, for example, identifies the following action step as a way to address "students' inability to complete degree requirements on time at regional campuses":

Form a task force to study the expansion of quality distance learning/online course offerings. Encourage collaboration and coordination among regional campuses to enhance access for students.

Likewise, page 119 of the *Blueprint* identifies as the second highest priority for "shared services and academic partnerships" the following strategy:

Consider adoption of an IU-wide online education strategy that promotes delivery of degree programs by all campuses and encourages partnerships among all regional campuses.

It would be helpful for the Commission to understand the status of these proposed strategies or action steps and for the University to explain how the proposed B.S. in Psychology is consistent with

¹ Page citations are to the online PDF version of the document

University plans for delivering additional distance education programs through the regional campuses. More generally, what are Indiana University's plans for regional campuses offering distance education programs?

Collaboration among campuses is and will remain essential to expanding access to and completion of quality degree programs in a cost-effective manner. In light of this, what should the Commission's expectations be relative to inter-campus collaboration when considering distance education programs for IU regional campuses? When all regional campuses have degree programs and resources in a particular discipline – such as Psychology – should the Commission expect collaboration among campuses as a condition of approving a distance education? If so, what is the nature and extent of this collaboration? Does close collaboration among campuses imply a more unified approach toward curricula?

Supporting Document

None.