October 7, 2009

Dr. Belle S. Wheelan, President
Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, GA 30033

Dear Dr. Wheelan,

By means of this letter, we wish to provide an update on distance learning programs and activities at the University of West Florida (UWF). At the time of our most recent reaffirmation of accreditation visit (2005), we reported the following programs available through distance learning formats:

Bachelor's Degrees (upper division component only):
BS Engineering Technology-Telecommunications/Instructional Support
BA Maritime Studies

Master's Degrees:
MSA Administration
MEd Curriculum & Instruction-Comprehensive Teacher Education
MEd Curriculum & Instruction-Education and Training Management
MEd Instructional Technology

Since 2005, with the increase in the number of UWF courses available to students in distance learning formats, we have developed a procedure for identifying the percentage of credit hours in each of our degree programs available to students through such formats. For most programs, only a portion of the program is available through a distance learning format. Some of our degree programs are offered only in a distance learning format (i.e., all of the courses in the program are available only in a distance learning format). For other programs, because one or more sections of courses required in the program are available in a distance learning format, students may be able to complete the entire program through distance learning by careful selection of course sections.

In the attached Inventory we have identified our programs that fall within each of the following distance-learning credit-hour percentage brackets based on course delivery formats available to
students during the three-year period 2006-07 through 2008-09 or as projected beginning with the 2009-10 academic year:

A. 25-49% of the program is available through a distance learning format
B. 50-99% of the program is available through a distance learning format.
C. 100% of the program is available through a distance learning format.

Several strategies for distance learning are available at UWF including (1) fully online instruction, (2) online hybrid instruction, (3) two-way videoconferencing instruction, and (4) instruction delivered on mobile technologies such as Personal Digital Assistants (PDA). In determining percentage of credits available through distance learning, only courses where the majority of instruction is distance learning have been included.

To provide information to students about programs that are available fully online, UWF maintains a web presence called the “Online Campus” accessible through the UWF homepage (http://uwf.edu) or http://onlinecampus.uwf.edu/. Students are provided information about each of the programs, how to apply to UWF, and how to register for courses. There is also a special section called “Gear Up for Online Learning” (http://onlinecampus.uwf.edu/gearup/) that provides a variety of tips and hints for students taking online courses based on actual students’ experiences in online courses.

Faculty support for distance learning is provided through our Academic Technology Center (ATC) (http://uwf.edu/atc/) and our Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (CUTLA) (http://uwf.edu/cutla/). In particular, Studio e is a series of courses offered by ATC and designed for the faculty member or adjunct who has assigned responsibility for teaching online courses. Studio e addresses very basic concepts in course design pedagogy, but also provides some far reaching strategies for engaging students fully while online. The Studio e process assists faculty members in planning for, designing, implementing and maintaining online courses. Professional development offered through ATC’s Studio e process includes:

- **Backstage: Developing the Online Course.** This face-to-face course is provides the pedagogical foundations of online learning, student engagement, and assessment. Participants review existing online courses while learning how to plan and develop a fully online course taking into account instructional alignment, learning theory, the role of the instructor (instructor presence) and the role of the student while actively engaging in a course. Participants design and develop a fully online course for implementation within the next academic year.
- **Onstage: Teaching Online.** This fully online course is targeted toward faculty and adjuncts who are teaching online and need to develop a more full understanding of student services, how to manage their time in an online class, tips for interacting with
• students each week, and a variety of resources including library resources, the ITS Help Desk, and so forth. The person taking this course will have a course completely ready to deliver.

• Take 2: Updating the Online Course. The focus of this course is to further analyze and develop opportunities for student engagement and online academic integrity in an existing online course. Participants in this course will have an online course that has been previously developed and implemented. Based on data gathered in an existing online course through student evaluations, peer evaluations and self-evaluations, course participants will make thoughtful decisions about online course modifications to take advantage of newer technologies for student engagement (such as using Elluminate Live!, incorporating games into instruction, etc.), as well as strengthening the academic integrity of the course (using protocols for proctored examinations, using tool-based solutions such as Turnitin, Respondus lock down browser, or using other strategies for alternative forms of assessment).

In 2008, UWF's Studio e was recognized by the Sloan Consortium with the Sloan-C award for Excellence in Faculty Development for Online Teaching.

In addition to using guidelines in the SACS/COC document “Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs,” UWF also subscribes to Quality Matters™, a faculty-centered, peer review process designed to certify the quality of online courses and online components.

Most recently, our Faculty Senate has endorsed, and our Provost has approved, a new policy that all courses not previously offered through a distance learning format but proposed for such offering must be reviewed and approved through UWF’s formal Curriculum Change Request process.

In this era of rapidly changing technologies related to instruction in higher education, we are trying to be responsive both to student demand for greater accessibility to course work and to the quality of the instruction offered through distance learning.

Sincerely,

Judith A. Bense, Ph. D.
President

cc: Dr. Chula King, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
    Dr. Pamela Northrup, Associate Provost of Academic Innovation and Continuing Education
Attachment

Inventory of University of West Florida Degree Programs by Percentage of Program Available in a Distance Learning Format as of Fall Semester 2009

A. 25-49% of the Program Available Through a Distance Learning Format
   1. All of UWF bachelor’s degree programs now have at least 25% of required coursework available through a distance education format, because a native UWF student may complete all requirements for the 36 semester hour (sh) general education requirement through distance learning courses.
   2. Master’s degrees:
      • MS Biology, Coast Zone Studies option (26.0101)
      • MS Computer Science (11.0101)
      • MA History, Public History option (54.0101)
      • MA Political Science (45.1001)
      • MEd Reading (13.1315)
   3. Doctor of Education degree:
      • EdD Curriculum and Instruction (13.0301)

B. 50-99% of the Program Available Through a Distance Learning Format
   1. Bachelor’s degrees:
      • BSBA Accounting (52.0301)
      • BA Anthropology (45.0201)
      • BS Computer Engineering (14.0901)
      • BS Computer Science (11.0101)
      • BA Criminal Justice (43.0104)
      • BSBA Economics (52.0601)
      • BS Electrical Engineering (14/1001)
      • BA Elementary Education (13,1201)
      • BS Environmental Studies (03.0104)
      • BS Engineering Technology (15.0000)
      • BSBA Finance (52.0801)
      • BA History (54.0101)
      • BS Hospitality, Recreation, and Resort Management (52.0901)
      • BS Interdisciplinary Information Technology (11.0103)
      • BA Interdisciplinary Social Studies (45.0101)
      • BA Legal Studies (22.0302)
• BSBA Management (52.0201)
• BSBA Management Information Sciences (52.1201)
• BSBA Marketing (52.1401)
• BA Middle Level Education (13.1203)
• BS Nursing (51.1601)
• BA Pre-K/Primary Education (13.1210)

2. Master’s degrees:
   • MEd College Student Personnel (13.1102)
   • MS Community Health Education (51.1504)
   • MS Criminal Justice (43.0104)

3. Education Specialist degrees:
   • EdS Curriculum and Instruction (13.0301)
   • EdS Educational Leadership (13.0401)

C. 100% of the Program Available Through a Distance Learning Format

1. Bachelor’s degrees:
   • BS Career and Technical Studies* (13.1320)
   • BS Engineering Technology, Information Engineering Technology option* (15.0000)
   • BA Exceptional Student Education (13.1001)
   • BS Health Science* (51.0000)
   • BS Interdisciplinary Information Technology, Networking and Telecommunication option* (11.0103)
   • BS Maritime Studies (26.1302)
   • BS Nursing RN-to-BSN* (51.1601)
   • BS Oceanography (40.0607)

2. Master’s degrees:
   • MAcc Accountancy (52.0301)
   • MSA Administration (entire program offered only online) (52.0206)
   • MS Computer Science, Software Engineering option (11.0101)
   • MEd Curriculum and Instruction (13.0301)
   • MEd Educational Leadership, Certification option (13.0401)
   • MEd Educational Leadership, ETMS options (entire programs offered only online) (13.0401)
   • MA Exceptional Student Education, Comprehensive option (13.1001)
   • MEd Instructional Technology (entire program offered only online) (13.0501)
   • MS Mathematics (27.0101)
• MPH Public Health (entire program offered only online) (51.2201)

3. Education Specialist degree:
   • EdS Educational Leadership, Certification option (13.0401)

*Upper-division required courses in this program are offered only through a distance learning format. Lower-division courses and electives may be taken through a traditional format.