NASPA
Student Affairs Administrators
in Higher Education

Distance Learning and Student Affairs

Defining the Issues

Report of the Distance Learning Task Force

Submitted to the NASPA Board of Directors

March 2000

Executive Summary

Distance learning, much like the Internet itself, is growing at an incredible rate. Everyone seems to want to "do it" but many are not sure what "it" is or how to do it. The new technologies hold promise to help lead higher education into a period of rapid change. Student affairs practitioners need to be prepared to deal effectively with the change, as they can be critical to a successful learning experience.

The main things for student affairs practitioners to be aware of are:

❏ Distance learning will be curriculum driven. That is, faculty will be the ones that define distance learning by the courses that they offer (or don't offer) in this new medium and students will define it by the courses they take (or don't take).

❏ The new technologies can be a great assistance to the administrative functions delivered by many student affairs practitioners and can even improve existing services. Admissions, Financial Aids, Student Information Systems, Registrar and Career Services (just to mention a few) have already benefited tremendously from technological advances. The new technologies have allowed us to serve students better, quicker, easier, cheaper and at times and places more convenient for the student.

❏ There are very few things that cannot be translated from a brick and mortar campus to a cyber campus. We can debate about quality but everything from academic advising to a virtual student union can be accomplished using the new technologies.

❏ The illusionary promise of savings or profits of distance education has a firm hold on the imaginations of legislators, trustees, or administrators who have only considered distance education as an abstraction. Anything that seems to wake them from their reveries is ignored or denied. It is hard to imagine distance education without courses. It is easy to imagine it without student support services and equally easy to rationalize not providing them. **This is a very real danger**. It may be that the distance learning student population needs different support services provided in imaginative ways, but they may need more support because the lack of structures and patterns of on campus education. We seriously short change students if we do not recognize our obligation to provide appropriate support of all sort – some extensions of what we provide on campus, some unique to the distance learning enterprise. This is part of the basic cost in providing distance education.[1]

❏ Many student affairs practitioners, along with their faculty colleagues, are concerned about what they fear may be a loss of the socialization function associated with college attendance with distance learning students on a cyber campus. They argue that the experience of "going to college" socializes students to be better citizens in our free society. They are concerned that this same process of socialization either cannot or will not occur on a cyber campus.

❏ A major tenant of many student affairs practitioners is the idea of involvement. Many are concerned with the perceived limited involvement of cyber students with their academic work or out-of-class socialization. Involvement and socialization go hand in hand.

❏ The task force identified six (6) areas of key issues for student affairs. They are:

♦ Certification/credentialing issues
◊ Distance education needs to be thought of as BOTH an enhancement to traditional instructional and administrative approaches AND as a

replacement for traditional and administrative tools in a totally different business of delivering education on a cyber campus.
◊ Assessment plays a key role in distance education. Student affairs practitioners have extensive expertise in assessment.

♦ Teaching/learning and curriculum based issues
◊ Faculty and the market will drive the process.
◊ Retention of students in a distance learning environment is a major challenge.
◊ We are still too focused on the traditional classroom paradigm and in learning being structured with the two-way format. Higher education needs to develop new paradigms.

♦ Organizational issues
◊ Student affairs needs to be involved from the beginning of any distance learning venture.
◊ We need to identify who the distance learning students are and identify their learning support needs.
◊ What traditional services should be offered? What new services specifically for distance learning students should be offered?

♦ Instruction on learning issues
◊ Student affairs expertise on learning instruction (academic success courses, supplemental instruction, learning resource labs, tutoring, etc.) can be put to good use in distance education.
◊ Motivation and active involvement of distance learning students is a major challenge.

♦ Issues for the student
◊ There is a strong need for educational planning in a distance learning environment. Student affairs has the expertise to provide leadership in this area.

♦ Community and affiliation issues
◊ Different students lead to different needs.
◊ Need to develop "virtual student unions."
◊ What is the role of distance education in the area of personal development and teaching citizenship?

One of the advantages of trying new things in education is that it forces us to rethink everything that we are doing. NASPA and AAHE are trying to figure out how to reintegrate academic affairs and student affairs on our traditional campuses. Thinking through the process of efficiently integrating student support services with instruction in a distance education environment has significant potential to help us find ways to reconceptualize the on-campus relationships. The worst thing that could happen is that the on-campus schism would be replicated in the distance mode. We need to be extremely careful how we proceed at this point.[2]

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Distance Learning and Student Affairs

Defining the Issues

Background

In August of 1998, President Cherry Callahan appointed a task force of NASPA members to have a discussion that might lead us ""beyond wondering" about student affairs and distance education to actual planning and subsequently to implementation."[3] The task force members included:

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The decision was made to conduct the business of the task force using distance learning technologies. The task force began its work in September 1998. After everyone's willingness to participate had been verified by telephone, email contact was established between the Chair

and each member. Kevin Kruger at the NASPA Central Office set up a listserv (distance@listserv.naspa.org) for the use of the task force.

We quickly discovered that each of us had a different level of expertise using the new technologies. Each of our campuses had a different way of supporting us with both software and hardware as we attempted to fit learning new tools into our busy schedules. I believe each of us has benefited from this experience by learning how students try to deal with the new learning technologies and the frustrations that are sometimes involved.

The task force conducted asynchronous[1] discussions during September and October utilizing the listserv as the vehicle for communication. Copies of those conversations are available for anyone who might be interested. On November 11, 1998 an online synchronous meeting and discussion was held with three task force members. On November 17, 1998 another online meeting and discussion was held with three other task force members. Chair Gary Kleemann participated in both discussions, which are the basis for this report.

Over the course of the next year, several presentations of versions of this report were presented to NASPA members and others in higher education. Task Force members remained in contact via the Distance Listserv. A version of this report was presented to the West Virginia Association of Student Personnel Administrators in October 1999. Another version was presented at the NASPA Western Regional Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia in November 1999. A brief summary of the report was given to all Regional Newsletter editors in December 1999 for possible inclusion in regional newsletters. This Final Report will be presented at the NASPA National Conference in Indianapolis, March 2000.

Issues about Distance Learning

Distance learning, much like the Internet itself, is growing at an incredible rate. About one-third of the nation's public and private 2-year and 4-year postsecondary education institutions offered any distance education courses during the 1997—98 academic year, and another one-fifth of the institutions planned to start offering such courses within the next 3 years.[4] During 1997—98, 78 percent of public 4-year institutions and 62 percent of public 2-year institutions offered distance education courses. There were an estimated 1,661,100 enrollments in all distance education courses, and 1,363,670 enrollments in college-level, credit granting distance education courses, with most of these at the undergraduate level. An estimated 54,470 different distance education courses were offered.[5]

Everyone seems to want to "do it" but many are not sure what "it" is or how to do it. The new technologies hold promise to help lead higher education into a period of rapid change. Student affairs practitioners need to be prepared to deal effectively with the change, as they are critical to a successful learning experience.

Sir John Daniel of Britain's Open University has identified four major issues of distance learning being given attention today. They are:

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[1]Lack of temporal concurrence; absence of synchronism. **— a·syn¹chro·nous** (-nəs) *adjective. The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition* copyright © 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Electronic version licensed from InfoSoft International, Inc. All rights reserved.

- Access

- Cost

- Curriculum (Knowledge and Skills)

- Flexibility [6]

Sir John Daniel concludes that soft methods rather than hardware are a key to success and that organization and process are more important than actual technology.

He goes on to identify six "Dimensions of Quality." They are:

1. Curriculum design, content and organization

2. Teaching, learning and assessment

3. Student progression and achievement

4. Student support and guidance

5. Learning resources

6. Quality assurance and enhancement

Many issues about distance education are now coming to the fore. Some of them include:
- equity of access to postsecondary education,
- the costs of developing and implementing distance education programs,
- accreditation of and quality assurance in distance education programs,
- copyright and intellectual property rights,
- changes and challenges facing the role of postsecondary faculty, and
- pressures on existing organizational structures and arrangements.[7]

Distance Learning and Issues for Student Affairs

The task force's charge was to identify the key distance learning issues for student affairs in order to prepare a base from which to launch broader discussions. As the task force held its discussions, the key issues seemed to break into six major areas:

1. Certification/credentialing issues:

Key Issue: Is the new technology driven "distance education" an enhancement to traditional instructional or administrative approaches or is it a replacement for traditional instructional or administrative approaches?

Should higher education leaders be thinking along two different "tracks" i.e., thinking of technology as an enhancement to the learning tools and administrative tools in support of our brick and mortar campuses AND thinking of technology as a REPLACEMENT for traditional learning tools and administrative tools in the totally different business of delivering education on a cyber campus?

Key Issue: Is distance learning a fundamentally "different business?"

Key Issue: If higher education saw itself in the learning business and not the instruction and degree granting business then we might see distance learning in different light.

Key Issue: What is the role of Student Affairs in career promotion in a cyber environment?

Key Issue: Assessment. Assessment plays such a key role, no matter if it is distance learning or on a physical campus. It is easier to think of credentialing as related to careers but the process is just as important to liberal education. Should higher education step back from credentialing and return to assessment? What role should Student Affairs play?

Key Issue: Student Affairs needs to do a better job of assessing our outcomes.

2. Teaching/learning and curriculum based issues:

Key Issue: To get more faculty involved in this process and have a number of degree programs available through this format.

Key Issue: The technology itself and getting faculty trained to use it.

Key Issues: Retention of students in a course and faculty buy-in to develop course materials.

Key Issue: Faculties are still struggling with bringing the new technologies into the classroom.

Key Issue: Will it go like the network news with a premium placed on entertainment values as opposed to traditional "academic" values?

Key Issue: Can a student get an EDUCATION (as opposed to training) over the net?

Key Issue: Is academe still too focused on the traditional classroom paradigm and in learning being structured with the two-way format?

Key Issue: In order to really LEARN one must invest some time, effort and reflection. Does distance learning allow for the required time, effort, and reflection?

3. Organizational issues:

Key Issue: Problems in the retention of students. Many people take a few courses but it is difficult for many students to make it through in this format.

Key Issue: Having Student Affairs involved appropriately up front and from the beginning.

Key Issue: Identifying just WHO the distance learning students are and how they are different than "regular" students?

Key Issue: Student Affair's first role is to provide the essential services needed to support distance learning. How can Student Affairs support the distance learning process (what services)?

Key Issue: How can Student Affairs add value and complement student learning in the cyber world?

Key Issue: The cost of providing virtual student services. How can student affairs meet all the increased needs with limited resources?

Key Issue: The increasing need to train our staff to deal with the new technology. Many embrace it but many do not understand it and some are afraid.

Key Issue: Graduate preparation programs should be focusing more on technical issues and training. Different skill sets are needed to work effectively in a virtual world. Training programs for Student Affairs need to be updated for the new virtual worlds.

Key Issue: How do students even get into a cyber educational system.

Key Issue: Most administrative processes of Student Affairs can be done well and easily adapted to distance learning and some can be done BETTER via distance learning but some are NOT done as well via distance learning.

Key Issue: Academe has learned that SOME kinds of instruction can be easily done via distance learning. Student services has been offering its programs and assistance aside from the classroom for so long anyway. Is distance learning just as removed?

Key Issue: Student Affairs needs to get over our phobias.

4. Instruction on learning:

Key Issue: The development of learning instruction on-line such as English as a second language, University 101, and study skills, etc.

Key Issue: How can student affairs expand our use of technology to better teach what we have long been responsible for?

Key Issue: What can student affairs offer to our cyber learners in the important areas of tutoring, advising, study skills, etc.?

Key Issue: Is distance learning for the self-motivated only? It may be easier to lose interest and not make progress at an acceptable rate with distance learning. What about the typically motivated undergraduate student? How does student affairs ***engage*** students in a distance learning environment?

Key Issue: Learning must be active – and connected to something meaningful. Student still needs to be INVOLVED. How does student affairs help guide students through the learning process? Or do we?

Key Issue: What should Student Affairs do to assist faculty in making it easier for students to access and learn in a customer service kind of way? That does not mean the course work is EASY. Our job is to support the faculty and the students.

5. Issues for the student:

Key Issue: Feedback to students. Educators need to better understand the importance of feedback and how students acquire it. How can Student Affairs assist with this in a cyber environment?

Key Issue: What can Student Affairs do to increase student motivation in a virtual environment?

Key Issue: There is a strong need for good educational planning. This is especially true for cyber students. Many students need and many educators think would greatly appreciate a super advisor (software program?) to work through all of the assessment, credentialing, transferring, etc. that goes into any educational process.

6. Community and affiliation issues:

> The way most large lecture classes (100-500) are taught now is just distance education with the teacher in the room: no social interaction is had during an overwhelmingly passive experience, which culminates in a cram-and-forget final exam.
>
> If we can do anything to change this, we should. On-line education is one of many possible solutions.
>
> The danger is that we will go from doing it badly in person to doing it badly on-line.
>
> -- Michael Sweet, Teaching Effectiveness Program, University of Oregon (posted 10/29/99.)

Key Issue: "Virtual student unions" There is lots to do to get it where we want it in terms of chat rooms and other interactive services.

Key Issue: How do we promote personal interaction in a virtual environment? Interaction and the use of multiple senses is key. Seeing, hearing and sensing the other person's presence can be important.

Key Issue: Different students/different needs. How does Student Affairs respond appropriately? Some of our distance learning is being taken by our students in the residence halls because it fits their schedules.

Key Issue: Distance learning permits us to provide "any place and any time" learning but it does not eliminate that need for human interaction and direct experience engagement when that is possible. Once technology has the ability to bring instruction right into the living room, so to speak, then we might see it differently.

Key Issue: At present there still are elements of the learning process that cannot be replicated through technology or distance delivery. We can communicate content but some experiences are more difficult to transfer in this mode

Key Issue: Where does our leadership see higher education going in the future? Does higher education still have a major role in the area of personal development and citizenship as well as teaching experiential learning?

Key Issue: Several Task Force members have been amazed by the types of students who come alive via distance learning -- the introverts -- the people who have way too many responsibilities (job, family, etc.) but want to pursue an education.

Key Issue: Students use online counseling services quite a bit and many of our tech-types actually like it. Many are comfortable in this medium but others are not.

Key Issue: Virtual services have the potential to handle many different niches.

Next Steps

- The discussion on distance learning has only just begun. Student Affairs needs to continue the discussion and, the Task Force suggests, broaden the discussion to include our academic colleagues. NASPA should play a leadership role in promoting this discussion.

- NASPA should attempt to identify those student affairs units which are actively and productively involved in providing student services to distance learners. We might call this an attempt at identifying "Best Practices" but since the area is changing so rapidly, we recommend calling it "Good Practices." We are not sure we know enough yet to identify "Best." As we collect "Good Practices," we need to try and figure out why we think they are good.

- NASPA needs to identify for distribution to the membership a listing of resources available both in the virtual and the "real" world for practitioners to consult about Distance Learning/Education. This might include identifying and/or developing relationships with other higher education associations who are working in this area. The IT network might be able to play a role in this effort.

- NASPA should address the training of student affairs professionals in distance education. NASPA should encourage such things as Conference themes related to distance education and regional workshops on the topic.

- The NASPA Central Office should identify other higher education associations who are working in this area (such as AAHE or EDUCAUSE) and recommend developing appropriate working relationships with them.

- NASPA should promote research on distance learning issues such as:

  - Who are the distance learners and (how) are they different from "regular" learners?

  - How can student affairs support the distance learning process (what new services/ what traditional services)?

  - What can/should graduate preparation programs be focusing on with regard to distance education?

- There are some other areas that might be undertaken by the Technology Network. Some examples include:

  - The development of "White Papers" on specific issues related to supporting distance learners in distance education. There are many, many issues that would benefit by such an exploration.

  - The possible development of a "Technical Institute for Student Affairs Professionals" at national or regional conferences or as a separate program.

  - The development of "virtual consulting teams." These would be individuals, or teams of individuals, with specific expertise who would be willing to provide consulting advice utilizing virtual modes of communication to others in student affairs that desired or needed advice on serving distance learners.

We need to investigate the nature of the distance learning experience. We need to examine this very closely. As Sir John Daniel has noted, soft methods rather than hardware are a key to success. Organization and process are more important than actual technology. Student Affairs needs to draw upon its strengths and help lead the way toward student centered distance learning. Distance Learning/Education is a dynamic and growing area of higher learning in America, distance learners have needs, and student affairs should be positively assertive in defining an appropriate role for itself in Distance Learning.

One of the advantages of trying new things in education is that it forces us to rethink everything that we are doing. NASPA and AAHE are trying to figure out how to reintegrate academic affairs and student affairs on our traditional campuses. Thinking through the process of efficiently integrating student support services with instruction in a distance education environment has a great deal of potential to help us find ways to reconceptualize the on-campus relationships. The worst thing that could happen is that the on-campus schism would be replicated in the distance mode. Student Affairs and our academic colleagues need to be extremely careful how we proceed at this point.[8]

Resources Consulted

During the course of the discussion, numerous paper and electronic resources have been consulted. Below is a partial listing of the major resources consulted by members of the task force.

1. Miser, Keith, Report Committee Chair, Western Governors University committee.

2. Sparks, Barbara, "Western Virtual University – Specifications for Providing Support Services. Learner Support Services of the Western Virtual University." The Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education: Boulder, CO. April 30, 1996.

3. Wade, Arnold, "The Role of Student Affairs in the Virtual University," ACPA Chicago, 1997. www.acpa.nche.edu/corcouns/msi/virtual.htm.

4. Washington On Line at www.waol.org.

5. Several articles from the technology section of *Academe Today*, the online version of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

6. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions: 1997—98.*NCES 2000-013, by Laurie Lewis, Kyle Snow, Elizabeth Farris, Douglas Levin. Bernie Greene, project officer. Washington, DC:1999.

7. Western Governors University web site at http://www.wgu.edu/wgu/index.html .

8 . Upcraft, M. Lee and Terenzini, Patrick T., "Looking Beyond the Horizon: Trends Shaping Student Affairs – Technology at http://www.acpa.nche.edu/srsch/Upcraft_Terenzini.htm

9. "DIGITAL DIPLOMA MILLS" http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue3_1/noble/

10. Chenalt, Brittney G., "Developing Personal and Emotional Relationships via Computer-Mediated Communications" (This scholarly piece includes extensive footnotes and references.) http://www.december.com/cmc/mag/1998/may/chenault.html

11. "Johnny Manhattan Meets the Furry Muckers" (This article is a fun read, but it includes some sexually explicit passages, including an account of the first widely publicized "virtual rape.") http://www.wired.com/wired/2.03/features/muds.html

12. Turkle, Sherry, Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet.

13. Turkle, Sherry, "Who Am We?" http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/4.01/turkle.html

The following is an edited transcript of the meetings held in November 1998.

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The charge to our group is to identify the key
Distance learning issues for student affairs in order to
prepare a base from which to launch broader discussions.

Gary Kleemann: tell me about what you at RIT are
doing with DL..."

Linda Kuk: We are getting very involved in the DL
area. We have DL on line and on locations in a number of
places throughout the world"

Gary Kleemann: What challenges are you finding for
Student Affairs with DL?"
Linda Kuk: We are trying to get more faculty involved in this
process and have a number of degree programs available
through this format"
Who is providing the leadership on your campus... I mean... a
faculty member, a dean, a ????"
Linda Kuk: We are seeing problems in the areas of retention of
students. Many people take a few courses but it is difficult
for students to make it through in this format"
Gary Kleemann: What appear to be the major stumbling
blocks??"
Linda Kuk: We have a center called Education Technology Center
and it is the major coordinator of these processes . The
actually degrees are coming out of departments with the
leadership of deans."
Gary Kleemann: and how does SA get plugged in??"
Linda Kuk: The major stumbler currently is the technology
itself and getting faculty trained to use it"
Linda Kuk: Currently we have only been involved on the fringe.
We are developing a virtual student union that we hope will be
a source of information and contact with distance learners"
Linda Kuk: We have also been involved in a few emergency
issues with students who are depressed and we have attempted
to
assist them on the phone and get then to local services in
their areas"
Gary Kleemann: So you would say that some KEY DL
issues are: retention and faculty by-in to develop course
materials..."
Gary Kleemann: Is that correct?"
Linda Kuk: We are also considering the development of learning
instruction on line such as English as a second language and
study skills etc."
Gary Kleemann: Another key issue: having SA involved
appropriately UPFRONT and from the beginning..."
Gary Kleemann: Key issue: learning skills on
line..."
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Linda Kuk: Yes I would agree. We have not actually been key in this process and I think we will eventually have to play a role"

Gary Kleemann: How is the "virtual" student union concept coming along???"

Linda Kuk: It is likely to be on line within the next few weeks."

Linda Kuk: We have lots to do to get it where we want it in terms of chat rooms and other interactive services "

Linda Kuk: Yes, it will be available on our Web site."

other KEY issues??"

Linda Kuk: Yes, I think we also need to think about the importance of human interaction especially in the personal development role of undergraduate education."

Gary Kleemann: **Key issue: personal interaction in a virtual environment"**

Linda Kuk: Teach graduate work that is focused on content and skill is easier to do distance. Yes, I would say that is key"

Gary Kleemann: How important is that for older, returning students?"

Linda Kuk: **We also need to understand the importance of feedback and how students acquire it"**

Gary Kleemann: **Key issue: Feedback to students"**

Gary Kleemann: What do you see as the KEY issues, Steve??"

Linda Kuk: I would also say that students will need to stay motivated and that is more difficult to achieve in isolation"

Gary Kleemann: **Key issue: Motivation in a virtual environment.."**

Linda Kuk: Once technology really becomes interactive and uses more of the senses all at once it will seem more real and I think it will be easier to create reality for students"

Gary Kleemann: As WE know.. it is not always easy to attend to email and such... easy to put off..."

Steve Roth: Sorry... getting interruptions here. Still think a major -- maybe the key -- issue is **identifying just WHO the DL students are."**

Gary Kleemann: This is more interactive than email..."

Linda Kuk: Yes, that is true. It also becomes a burden and if one is compulsive it can even become addictive"

Gary Kleemann: **KEY issue: Who are DL students and how are they different than "regular" students..** Is that correct, steve?"

Steve Roth: Think of what we know about adult students and their needs -- does not fit traditional student services"

Linda Kuk: e-mail is only one way, not really much different than snail except faster"

Gary Kleemann: **different students/different needs... how does SA respond appropriately..."**

Steve Roth: I think we'll find that most DL students are going to be more like adult students than our 18-22 year olds."

Gary Kleemann: that has been my experience largely...but still SOME traditional students take DL courses because they like it better and it fits into their schedules better..."

Linda Kuk: Interaction and use of multiple senses is key...
seeing, hearing and sensing the others persons presence. I
think undergraduates will also use DL but not as much"
Linda Kuk: Yes, we find that most of our DL is being
taken by our students in the residence halls because it fits
their schedules"

Q2: Is the new technology driven "distance education" an
enhancement to traditional instructional or administrative
approaches or is it a replacement for traditional
instructional or administrative approaches?

Should we be thinking along two different "tracks" i.e.,
thinking of technology as an enhancement to the learning tools
and administrative tools in support of our brick and mortar
campuses AND thinking of technology as a REPLACEMENT for
traditional learning tools and administrative tools in the
totally different business of delivering education on a cyber
campus??

Gary Kleemann: Enhancement or replacement or both???"
Steve Roth: It's both"
Gary Kleemann: How so???"
Steve Roth: For Linda's RIT students it's enhancement"
Steve Roth: For other students "out there" it's replacement"
Linda Kuk: I think it is an enhancement at this time. It is a
tool to enhance learning. but it does expand the options of
when and how it occurs "
Gary Kleemann: Is it (DL) a fundamentally "different
business"?"
Linda Kuk: It is a replacement if one can't access it any
other way... but that does not make it better or even more
desirable"
Gary Kleemann: different strokes for different folks???"
Steve Roth: At the present time, it's not a different
business, but I think down the road it will likely become
one."
Linda Kuk: If we see ourselves in the learning business and
not the instruction and degree granting business than we might
see DL in different light"
Gary Kleemann: I think that faculty see it as a VERY
different..."
Gary Kleemann: Good point, Linda!"
Steve Roth: Which is why it may become a different business,
if faculty don't accept it fully."
Gary Kleemann: What has been your experiences with faculty and
DL??"
Linda Kuk: DL permits us to provide any place and any time
learning but it does not eliminate that need for human
interaction and direct experience engagement when that is
possible. Once we have the ability to bring instruction right

into the living room so to speak than we might see it
differently."
Steve Roth: I've been operating at liberal arts colleges -- my
faculty are still struggling with bringing technology into
the classroom"
Gary Kleemann: Will it go like the network news...with a
premium placed on entertainment values as opposed to
traditional "academic" values???"
Steve Roth: It could -- and I think that's what faculty fear."
Linda Kuk: At present we still have other elements of the
learning process that can not be replicated through technology
or distance delivery. We can communicate content but
experiences are more difficult to transfer in this mode"
Linda Kuk: How does one teach Art or counseling through
technology"
Gary Kleemann: Art can be taught using some great
visuals over the net..."
Gary Kleemann: and can be interactive with a whiteboard or
other tools..."
Gary Kleemann: counseling however, I think "
Steve Roth: Will DL really be a replacement for a liberal
education?"
Steve Roth: Or is its potential more as a vehicle for
training?"
Gary Kleemann: Replacement??? or different way of delivery??"
Steve Roth: Yes, replacement? Can a student receive an
education over the Net?"
Gary Kleemann: Well.. good question"
Gary Kleemann: **KEY ISSUE: Can a student get an EDUCATION over
the net?? As opposed to training?"**
Steve Roth: Hmmm... guess that is a key issue!"
Linda Kuk: Yes, I think some students expect to be entertained
and needing that to stay involved"
Steve Roth: Well, I think the one we just framed as a key
issue would be worth asking. Can a student get an education
over the
net?"
Gary Kleemann: Isn't that a question for our faculty??"
Steve Roth: Probably"
Gary Kleemann: How can SA help in answering that question?"
Steve Roth: That gets to two issues: **How can SA support the DL
process (services)?"**
How can SA complement student learning in the DL world?"
Gary Kleemann: good questions Steve..."
Gary Kleemann: but assuming that DL moves forward... no matter
what... what is student affairs role... in the new
entertainment business of DL...???"
Steve Roth: SA's **first role, it seems to me, is to provide the
essential services needed to support DL"**
Gary Kleemann: which are???"
Roth Advisement, career services, what else?"
Gary Kleemann: enrollment mgt."
Gary Kleemann: student activities???"

Gary Kleemann: counseling???"
Gary Kleemann: learning skills???"
Steve Roth: I doubt personal counseling is going to appear
soon..."
Steve Roth: learning skills, certainly."
Linda Kuk: **where do we see higher education going in the
future? Do we still have a major role in the area of personal
development and citizenship as well as teaching experiential
learning ?"**
Gary Kleemann: Good question, Linda!!"

Linda Kuk: We actually do some indirect counseling through the
internet"
Gary Kleemann: how so??"
Linda Kuk: We have a service we call Uncle Nate ...students
can get advice and referral services to personal and academic
questions. We also have chat rooms on student life and we
often respond to broad student issues and discussions. I
envision that we might expand this to more specific topic area
s once we have the virtual union up and running"
Gary Kleemann: I like that!!"
Steve Roth: But could we do interactive counseling over the
net? Does a chat room suffice?"
Gary Kleemann: Is your campus doing anything to deal with DL
students, Steve??"
Linda Kuk: **We find that students use this service quite a bit
and many of our techy types actually like it. They are
comfortable in this medium... others are not."**
Gary Kleemann: A chat room has its own advantages and
disadvantages..."
Steve Roth: Yep... I know about RIT students fondness for the
tube...."
Linda Kuk: What we need is more diverse and customized
services for different types of people"
Steve Roth: Gary, we're not doing any DL stuff down here right
now. spring hill is still catching up."
Steve Roth: I agree, Linda. What I like about virtual
services is the potential to **handle many different niches**."
Linda Kuk: We are trying to envision **how we can meet all the
increased needs with limited resources... I think this is
another issue"**
Steve Roth: I see a useful SA role in virtual student
services"
Gary Kleemann: yes... **KEY ISSUE: Cost of providing
virtual SA services..."**
Steve Roth: I'm less sure (or clear) on how we provide
interactive support with DL'ers."
Linda Kuk: As technology plays a bigger role in our learning
systems we have to have more time to deal with it. we are also
attracting students we never attracted before .. this adds
more demand and no new resources... cost is big issue"
Gary Kleemann: or the level of need for services...??"

Gary Kleemann: or level of need for different KINDS of services...??"
Steve Roth: Cost is VERY big -- and the major drain (or need) continues to be staff"
Linda Kuk: we also face the **increasing need to train our staff to deal with technology** They are not use to it and many are afraid"
Gary Kleemann: Yes, **different skill sets are need to work effectively in a virtual world**.."
Steve Roth: Very true, Linda. Talk to new CSP grads about their experience or comfort with computer technology .... it's low."
Gary Kleemann: high tech and soft touch... ??????"
Gary Kleemann: **KEY issue: training programs for SA need to be updated for the new virtual worlds...**"
Steve Roth: Is this another issue? **Should graduate prep. programs be focusing more on technical issues and training???**"
Linda Kuk: I do envision the day when we will have interactive technology that creates virtual reality in 3-D and we can use it for **experiential learning** ...we need to get ready for this it is coming fast and we can be big users of this technology"
Gary Kleemann: well, IMHO, it should certainly be a PART of grad prep..."
Linda Kuk: Absolutely... they need to know how to use it and how to create new uses for it"
Gary Kleemann: you betcha..."
Steve Roth: I keep thinking in terms of what we have now -- but Linda makes a good point that there are dramatic changes coming..."
Linda Kuk: **We are still too focused on the traditional classroom paradigm** and in learning being structured with the two way format"
Gary Kleemann: yes, sometimes hard to imagine what things will be like 5 years from now.... especially if you think how FAR we have come in the past 5 years!"
Steve Roth: Ok. Is that true for SA also? Are we stuck in a paradigm?"
Gary Kleemann: I think we are..."
Gary Kleemann: and we need to learn to think in new ways..."
Linda Kuk: Image being able to transcend the idea of teach "high risk" behavior modification through virtual reality and having student experience it without getting hurt or hurting someone else"
Gary Kleemann: and the same for our faculty colleagues"
Gary Kleemann: A VERY interesting thought, Linda"
Gary Kleemann: Well, this has been a great conversation!!"
Linda Kuk: **How can we expand our use of technology to better teach what we in student affairs have long been responsible for?**

■■■

Gary Kleemann: One of the things that I have learned in this
process is the benefits and the difficulty in working with
folks in different time zones and different schedules"
Like now..."
Penny Wills: Now don't be unkind to us southerners!"
Gary Kleemann: Not meant to be unkind..."
Shannon Ellis: Boy are you guys sensitive! But you pinpoint a
real issue for our students using distance learning."
Gary Kleemann: Just that it presents problems when folks have
SO many other things going on..."
Shannon Ellis: And certainly the type of person likely to use
distance learning is as busy as we are."
Gary Kleemann: and the difficulty in getting people to respond
to questions "
Shannon Ellis: Exactly - it is easy to "blow off" an email"
Gary Kleemann: Tell me what you think/have learned about
asynchronous communication/learning.."
Shannon Ellis: That it is slow - I measure my words - check
for typos - think faster than my hands"
Penny Wills: Don't know when to chime in or risk being rude
for interruption."
Gary Kleemann: Try not to worry about typos or spelling..."
Penny Wills: But I've found that if we pose questions/
statements and ask for feedback on specific points then one
can appreciate the flow of the conversation"
Gary Kleemann: Best to chime in at ANY time..."
Gary Kleemann: Yes, Penny. Got to ask SPECIFIC Q..."

Gary Kleemann: we need to identify KEY issues for SA..."
Shannon Ellis: I'd respond by asking that we start with
LEARNING - "
Gary Kleemann: What about learning?"
Penny Wills: Learning in any case is a process"
Shannon Ellis: What can we offer to our learners in the
important areas of tutoring, advising, study skills, etc."
Penny Wills: I think you (Gary) made a good distinction
between learning and education"
Gary Kleemann: But what about the question of what BUSINESS we
are in??"
Penny Wills: In response to you Shannon...I think we can offer
all of these services via distance learning."
Gary Kleemann: That is, is dl a different business than
regular college education??"
Shannon Ellis: Helping students have the best
possible learning experience possible."
Penny Wills: What do you mean by business...I don't think it
is a different business than regular college."
Gary Kleemann: Are we talking about liberal education or
technical training?"
Shannon Ellis: Learning is learning"
Penny Wills: Doesn't matter to me about LE and TT"

Gary Kleemann: What I mean is that SO many of the assumptions we use in "regular" higher education don't seem to apply in dl..."
Shannon Ellis: For example, one on one personal contact?"
Gary Kleemann: faculty issues like tenure and class time and research and ..."
Penny Wills: I like to view distance learning as something I would be very interested in if I were returning for a degree....I really would not look forward to driving hours to get to a college...sit in a class...at their time frame....etc."
Gary Kleemann: dl for the self-motivated..."
Gary Kleemann: but what about the unmotivated?"
Shannon Ellis: We have plenty of those on our campuses"
Gary Kleemann: sure do..."
Gary Kleemann: students searching for some meaning"
Penny Wills: True - I would bet that self motivated would do better but others I think need to get ''engaged'' in the learning process and too often we assume that they are because they are in the classroom...sitting there."
Gary Kleemann: typical Chickering vector stuff.."
Shannon Ellis: But you are right - it may be easier to lose interest and not make progress at a greater rate with dl"
Penny Wills: Not clear what you mean, Shannon"
Gary Kleemann: Engagement... I think that is KEY"
Shannon Ellis: Well - I don't know if it can be proven but might there be a greater "non-completion of course work" rate for dl's"
Gary Kleemann: How do we engage students in a dl environment??"
Penny Wills: I'm teaching an orientation class now heavily integrated with technology. It has really highlighted how much we assume that students are ''engaged'' and are often not understanding why they are pursuing a college education."
Shannon Ellis: FREQUENT contact - and maybe in a variety of forms - letter, phone call - even personal contact by having them do a residency at some point if there is a campus to do residency at!"
Penny Wills: How do we get them engaged? I think it comes back to having a goal. We all know how much the human being can accomplish when they have a goal"
Gary Kleemann: one of "problems" with dl, IMHO, is that it is sold as a quick McDonald's kind of thing.."
Gary Kleemann: something you can do between doing other things..."
Shannon Ellis: Learning must be active - and connected to something meaningful"
Gary Kleemann: that it does not really require great time or involvement"
Penny Wills: Shannon, I'm not sure residency is the answer. The student has to decide themselves if they value this."
Gary Kleemann: I agree, Penny"
Gary Kleemann: but..."

Gary Kleemann: student still needs to be INVOLVED..."
Shannon Ellis: Absolutely - for example, our good friend
Susan Hunter Hancock at Pacific Oaks has a residency piece but
most is distance learning"
Penny Wills: There will always be the McDonald's and then
there is the learning that comes alive. I don't view DL as a
quick fix. It's like the open book exam mentality....those
tests are actually more difficult than any others I've taken!"
Gary Kleemann: some of the appeal of dl for SOME folks is the
credentialing aspect..."
Shannon Ellis: Let's follow the involved theme – can they tie
their studies into their current work or future aspirations of
life be it career or otherwise?"
Gary Kleemann: not necessarily the education aspect..."
Gary Kleemann: Yes, Shannon"
Penny Wills: If you were going to pursue another degree how
would you feel having to travel to Alaska for a residency
requirement? What would you hope to accomplish by physically
traveling which couldn't be done via DL?"
Gary Kleemann: and if they do that, dl has a LOT to offer"
Shannon Ellis: So maybe we have hit on more of a career
promotion emphasis for dl?"
Gary Kleemann: certainly that is part of it."
Gary Kleemann: and the role of SA in career promotion??"
Shannon Ellis: Then career connections to the curriculum
should be strong"
Gary Kleemann: yes.."
Shannon Ellis: And student services should not be ashamed of
this - nor faculty!"
Penny Wills: I don't see it as just career promotion"
Gary Kleemann: say more, penny"
Shannon Ellis: No - not JUST that but certainly a piece we
should highlight among others"
Penny Wills: It's easier to think of credentialing as related
to careers but the process is just as important to Liberal
education. I guess I would step away from credentialing and go
back to assessment. That to me is the key aspect in this whole
arena."
Penny Wills: Did you receive my message earlier about the
Intelligence Agent in student services?"
Gary Kleemann: Not sure I understand, Penny..."
Gary Kleemann: No"
Gary Kleemann: Intelligence Agent??"
Shannon Ellis: Is this a new job category!!"
Penny Wills: Assessment...that plays such a key role...no
matter if it is distance learning or on a physical campus. "
Gary Kleemann: Yes, I agree..."
Penny Wills: we assess past credentials, assess abilities,
placement tests, review transcripts, review career and
education goals"
Shannon Ellis: Bopy - I think we all agree - are you
specifically thinking assessment of what a student learns??"

Gary Kleemann: We need to do a better job of assessing our outcomes.."
Shannon Ellis: learning outcomes?"
Gary Kleemann: Yes... all outcomes..."
Gary Kleemann: Without going test crazy]"
Shannon Ellis: So far this conversation parallels what we focus on in traditional higher ed"
Gary Kleemann: Good point, Shannon..."
Penny Wills: Yes, I strongly agree with outcomes but let's first see **how our students even get into the system**. And then how do **we guide them through the learning process**?"
Gary Kleemann: Yes.."
Shannon Ellis: You mean apply on line?"
Gary Kleemann: But how does DL fit into this?"
Gary Kleemann: What have we learned so far??"
Shannon Ellis: Make it easy to access and learn in a customer service kind of way - that does not mean the course work is EASY"
Penny Wills: Distance learning highlights what our regular education modes assumes already...whether justifiable or not."
Gary Kleemann: Seems to me that we have learned that the **"administrative" processes of SA can be well and easily adapted to DL..."**
Penny Wills: YES!!!:)"
Shannon Ellis: absolutely"
Gary Kleemann: We have learned that **SOME kinds of instruction can be easily done via DL**"
Shannon Ellis: Student services has been offering its programs and assistance aside from the classroom for so long anyway.....so dl is just as removed"
Gary Kleemann: and some can be done BETTER via DL"
Gary Kleemann: but some are NOT done well via DL"
Shannon Ellis: like personal counseling?"
Penny Wills: But I think there is more....that it highlights the strong need for educational planning....that students need and I think would greatly appreciate a super advisor (IA) to work through all of the assessment, credentialing, transferring, etc. that goes into any education process."
Gary Kleemann: Oh, yes... the super advisor idea... now I remember..."
Gary Kleemann: I agree with the concept.. but"
Penny Wills: Too often students are offered such services (and often don't have a clue that they exist) in a very disjointed manner"
Gary Kleemann: I was "career counseling" a student the other day..."
Gary Kleemann: he knew "sorta" what he wanted to do but I got more from his facial expressions than I did from his words.."
Shannon Ellis: yes yes yes"
Gary Kleemann: If I relied ONLY on his words... I probably would have counseled him different than I did"
Penny Wills: I've been surprised with what the entire world can pick up via selective key strokes ....LIKE SCREAMING OVER

THE INTERNET!!!"
Gary Kleemann: when I also had the physical inputs..."
Gary Kleemann: YES!!"
Gary Kleemann: But even SCREEMING likes something in the translation"
Penny Wills: I feel confident that we can acquire other key strokes into our written word...But more importantly there is technology that captures non-verbals."
Shannon Ellis: It helps a lot that I know the two of you already."
Gary Kleemann: You have to KNOW that you want to scream..."
Gary Kleemann: True.."
Gary Kleemann: But DL is happening.. not a question"
Gary Kleemann: So how DO we (SA) deal with it??"
Shannon Ellis: First - **WE need to get over our phobias**"
Penny Wills: Deal with it? or help our students?"
Gary Kleemann: We HAVE TO deal with students long distance..."
Gary Kleemann: good point, Penny"
Shannon Ellis: Yes - happily so - and people need to research and write about effective pedagogy and service delivery"
Gary Kleemann: deal with it SO we can help our students.."
Gary Kleemann: Phobias??"
Gary Kleemann: like fear of technology??"
Gary Kleemann: or??"
Shannon Ellis: Ha - I thought that is why I was on this committee"
Penny Wills: I view this often by thinking about others who are pursuing degrees in today's world. Most of our students have multiple responsibilities. Most would like classes offered at their times not someone else's. Most are surrounded by technology already let's use it to meet their needs."
Gary Kleemann: I agree Penny... except..."
Gary Kleemann: I am all for time shifting and convenience and all the rest..."
Penny Wills: I'm amazed by the types of students who come alive via distance learning....the introverts....the people who have mucho responsibilities but want to pursue an education."
Shannon Ellis: Great point"
Gary Kleemann: but I also believe that in order **to really LEARN you must invest some time, effort and reflection...**"
Penny Wills: Definitely Gary!"
Shannon Ellis: Reflection is the piece I worry about"
Gary Kleemann: and yes, the introverts are attracted..."
Penny Wills: What is it about DL that you think wouldn't require time, effort, and reflection?"
Shannon Ellis: We have beautiful campuses or good libraries for that very purpose whether urban or rural"
Gary Kleemann: Good question, Penny..."
Penny Wills: In my class I'm amazed again how much we assume that they are reflecting....I found out in a humble way that their journals revealed something else!"

Gary Kleemann: ABSOLUTELY, Penny!!"
Shannon Ellis: Someone racing around, cramming in courses at
midnight on the Internet etc may not be forced to reflect But
even the journal itself is a reflection"
Gary Kleemann: Student journals are a great way to see the
lack of reflection that often occurs!!"
Shannon Ellis: So let's make journaling a must in DL"
Gary Kleemann: Not our job..."
Penny Wills: It's one option to use to reflect, others may
suggest other options"
Gary Kleemann: our job is to support the faculty..."
Gary Kleemann: and the students"
Shannon Ellis: so isn't journaling recommendation to faculty
a good thing we can do?"
Gary Kleemann: sure... recommendation..."
Shannon Ellis: And teaching courses like Penny's freshmen
year class could have it?"
Gary Kleemann: but I know of faculty who want to teach about
electrical circuits... and not about journaling..."
Shannon Ellis: Great example - so we need to work with those
faculty, their deans and department heads just like we do now
on campus"
Gary Kleemann: or the joys of coding in C++"
Penny Wills: Just think what we are experiencing now ...
chatting with each other....one, we're engaged in
learning...struggling with a concept...thinking...expressing
ourselves...but what else have we learned about ourselves....I
for example have found how much I needed to get over the fear
of interrupting the two of you in your discussion. Then
reflecting before I respond. Etc."
Shannon Ellis: Our engineering dean teaches a great class
that combines the technical with the reflective and study
skills to boot - they are not separate - never should have
been disconnected"
Gary Kleemann: Good learning experience for each of us!!!"
Gary Kleemann: I think that this past hour has been most
productive..."
Shannon Ellis: Absolutely - and as a visual learner I like
seeing words and REFLECTING (that was a scream)"
Penny Wills: About the more concrete learning....when I see
what is available in laboratories electronically - and that
A&P courses now have better models via the web than any
human....it's more than interesting...it opens a lot more
options to our students for reinforcement, experimentation,
etc."
Gary Kleemann: I am hopeful the others will be able to come
together next time..."
Gary Kleemann: Yes, Penny...you have some great experiences it
sounds like"

Endnotes

[1] Email from David Schwalm, Vice Provost, ASU East, to Gary Kleemann dated November 28, 1998.

[2] Email from David Schwalm, Vice Provost, ASU East, to Gary Kleemann dated November 28, 1998.

[3] Letter from Cherry Callahan dated August 3, 1998 to task force members asking them to serve.

[4] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions: 1997—98.*NCES 2000-013, by Laurie Lewis, Kyle Snow, Elizabeth Farris, Douglas Levin. Bernie Greene, project officer. Washington, DC:1999.

[5] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions: 1997—98.*NCES 2000-013, by Laurie Lewis, Kyle Snow, Elizabeth Farris, Douglas Levin. Bernie Greene, project officer. Washington, DC:1999.

[6] Daniel, John S. *Mega-Universities and Knowledge Media.* 1997.

[7] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions: 1997—98.*NCES 2000-013, by Laurie Lewis, Kyle Snow, Elizabeth Farris, Douglas Levin. Bernie Greene, project officer. Washington, DC:1999.

[8] Email from David Schwalm, Vice Provost, ASU East, to Gary Kleemann dated November 28, 1998.