Chapter 14: *Request for Institutional Change*

Introduction

As a state-assisted institution, Ball State University focuses on access to educational opportunities for Indiana residents. Distance education offerings in selected areas of institutional strength provide increased access for members of the state's workforce who seek to further their education and enhance their careers. Furthermore, Goal IV of the university's current strategic plan calls for the institution to "attain optimal enrollment through selective admissions policies and successful retention programs." Distance education credit programs are developed and offered to off-campus students to supplement the university's on-campus enrollment. This helps Ball State maintain a consistent and adequate level of state funding in order to carry out all aspects of its mission.

Another component of the university's mission is outlined in Goal V of the strategic plan, which states that Ball State "will continue to be a best-practice institution in the innovative use of instructional and information technology." The satellite television and Internet programs offered by the School of Extended Education (SEE) provide an opportunity for faculty to experiment with and learn about the use of information technology to enhance teaching. Ball State supports these efforts by offering internal grant support and training to faculty to develop SEE degree programs. These grants provide a powerful incentive for faculty to introduce themselves to the use of instructional and information technology. Often the electronic instructional components of a distance education course are used to enhance a faculty member's on-campus course. Another example can be found in the online information literacy tutorials developed collaboratively by the School of Nursing faculty and the Bracken Library instructional staff. Instructional components from this collaboration are used for both distance education and on-campus courses and programs.

Goal VI of the strategic plan calls for the university to "broaden, diversify, and enrich its relationships beyond the campus." Offering electronic courses and degree programs to students throughout the Indiana is an important element of executing this goal and one reason for the university's financial support of the School of Extended Education.

Proposed Change

Ball State University requests permission to offer carefully selected undergraduate and graduate courses, credit certificates, and degree programs electronically without geographic boundaries.

The university currently offers a limited number of degrees to off-campus students through interactive satellite television and the Internet. These include:

- master of business administration
- master of arts in education in educational administration and supervision
- master of arts in industrial vocational/technical education
- master of arts in technology education
- master of science in nursing

In addition, Internet courses are available that allow students to complete the following:

- licensure for gifted and talented (for principals or superintendents)
- baccalaureate completion in nursing
- specialization in coaching (physical education)
- certificate in business

Finally, several graduate electronic distance education courses allow K–12 teachers and administrators to achieve or maintain their professional credentials in the following areas:

- elementary education
- special education
- school superintendent
- educational administration

Expected Outcomes of Proposed Change

Expected outcomes of the proposed change are continued growth in enrollment in off-campus electronic courses through the School of Extended Education, an increase in access to educational opportunities for Indiana residents, and expanded opportunities for faculty to enhance teaching and for the university to continue to be a best-practice institution in the innovative use of instructional and information technology. A final outcome will be the continued financial growth of the institution.

Enrollment in electronically delivered off-campus courses and degree programs has increased steadily for several years. Table 14.1 on the next page shows the growth in the number of annual full-time equivalent (FTE) students enrolled in satellite television and Internet courses during the past five academic years.

There is every reason to believe this growth will continue in the future as the trend toward working adult students enrolling in part-time off-campus distance education courses continues nationwide and throughout Indiana. The university anticipates continued enrollment growth in its existing electronic degree programs and additional

Table 14.1: Electronic Off-Campus Courses 1998 2002
(student FTE by delivery mode)

Delivery Mode	1998 99	1999 00	2000 01	2001 02	2002 03
Satellite TV	102	98	122	138	143
Internet	9	44	100	125	137

enrollment from online master's degree programs initiated in 2002–03. As an example, Table 14.2 below represents the fall enrollment growth in two electronically delivered nursing degree programs since 2000.

Table 14.2: Fall Enrollment Growth,
Electronically Delivered Nursing Degree Programs

Year	Head Count
2000	160
2001	195
2002	222
2003	204

Ball State's electronic distance education course offerings are financially self-supporting, as shown in the document *School of Extended Education Financial Overview 2001: Comparison by Mode of Delivery* (Exhibit 72 in the resource room). The university anticipates this financial situation to continue. The distance education fee structure will enable the institution to sustain the financial feasibility of electronically delivered courses and degree programs in the future. Cost-comparison analyses conducted by SEE revealed that Ball State's fees are competitive when judged against those of other universities in the region. Furthermore, the income-generating potential of some of the university's electronic distance education programs is significant. Sample income models can be found in the document *Distance Education Financial Analysis, 2001–2002 Academic Year* (Exhibit 30 in the resource room).

Impact of Proposed Change

The proposed change will have two primary results. First, educational access for place-bound professionals will be significantly increased. For example, the number of students enrolled in graduate study in the School of Nursing has risen each year. When the master's program was offered only on campus, the number of students who could attend was limited by driving distance and the time of the offerings. The type of nursing student currently pursuing an online degree from Ball State is similar to the type who previously pursued a degree on campus: a baccalaureate-prepared registered nurse working

in a health care setting. In another example, enrollment has increased in the online specialization in coaching due to the availability of the degree program to a more diverse geographic population. In spring 2002, the program offered two courses to a total of 16 students. In summer and fall 2002, 132 students were enrolled in eight courses. Finally, the average enrollment in the industry and technology online program between fall 2000 and summer 2003 was 17.2 students per semester, compared with 5.8 per semester when the course was offered live on campus. Furthermore, the program's head count had increased from 11 in fall 1996 to 31 in fall 2002.

A second impact of the proposed change is Ball State's enhanced capacity to address goals stated in its strategic plan. For example, offering two industry and technology degree programs through the Internet pushes the university to "continue to be a best-practice institution in the innovative use of instructional and information technology" and to "broaden, diversify, and enrich its relationship beyond the campus," both goals of the strategic plan. Consistent with the goals of the plan, the proposed change also provides opportunities to meet the educational needs of Indiana's K–12 teachers. The annual full-time equivalent (FTE) students who are K–12 teachers enrolled in the university's electronically delivered graduate courses increased from 37.2 in 1999–2000 to 163.6 in 2002–03.

Commission Policy Relevant to Proposed Change

The commission's policy relevant to this change is Changes in Educational Offerings: Degree programs offered through distance delivery methods (Policy I.C.2.b.).

Factors Leading the Institution to Undertake Proposed Change

Relationship Between Proposed Change and Ongoing Institutional Planning

The electronic distance learning courses and degrees offered through the School of Extended Education (SEE) are closely aligned with Goals IV, V, and VI of the *Ball State University Strategic Plan 2001–2006.* To ensure this alignment, each of the goals and objectives developed by SEE corresponds to one or more of these university goals or their stated objectives. To achieve these goals and objectives, the president, the provost and vice president for academic affairs, and the dean of the School of Extended Education agreed to expand current electronic course, certificate, and degree options.

Through a university-wide distance education strategic planning process conducted in 2000–01, Ball State decided to focus its distance education resources and activities

toward offering electronic graduate and professional degree programs, particularly in the field of education. To this end, the university has concentrated on the development of additional electronic courses in graduate education. For details, see the *Ball State University Distance Education Strategic Plan* (Exhibit 31 in the resource room).

Needs Analysis Related to Proposed Change

Various factors determine whether or not a course or degree program should be offered electronically to off-campus students. Workforce shortages in certain fields indicate the need for the university to provide these educational opportunities to students throughout the state. The best example of this can be seen in nursing. The increasing shortage of nurses nationally has been documented in numerous publications and newsletters. According to a 1999 report by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Nursing projects that 114,500 full-time equivalent (FTE) registered nurse jobs will be vacant by the year 2015. The AACN reported that distance education historically has increased access to education. The AACN report further asserted that the academic professorate is aging. Therefore, the AACN supports distance education for nurses.

Other reports documenting the nursing shortage and its implications for national health care were summarized in Ball State's *Request for Approval for Changes in Educational Offerings* submitted to the Higher Learning Commission in June 2002 (Exhibit 67 in the resource room). The conclusions drawn from these reports prompted the creation of a nurse practitioner graduate program and the subsequent delivery of this program online. The School of Nursing also is delivering the leadership track online to provide graduate education to nursing faculty and administrators both in Indiana and across the United States.

The Department of Industry and Technology decided to offer two of its graduate degrees through the Internet for several reasons. First and foremost, teachers often are place-bound and therefore may have limited access to educational offerings available on campus. Second, a master's degree in industry and technology is still required for teachers in a number of states, and even where it is not required, there often is a continuing education requirement. Third, those teachers who obtain a master's degree often benefit from a significant pay increase. Fourth, when the online degrees were initiated, there were no other online master's degree programs in technology education offered in the United States. Finally, a degree at the master's level does not require the training on technical equipment included in a bachelor's degree in technology education, making the graduate program better suited to Internet delivery.

Involvement of Various Constituencies in Developing Proposed Change

Whenever a decision is made to offer a course or degree electronically to off-campus students, it takes a deliberative and collaborative effort involving the academic department chairperson and faculty, the college dean and curriculum committee, University Senate's Graduate or Undergraduate Education Committee, the dean of the Graduate School, and the dean of the School of Extended Education. The formal and necessary steps in the process are outlined in the university's *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook,* Section IV, "Academic Policies and Procedures, Posting of Courses and Curricula," pp. 219–222 (Exhibit 34 in the resource room).

The primary stakeholders consider the availability of resources to support new distance education course development as they evaluate whether to offer a course electronically. The process of granting stipends for the development of electronic courses involves the faculty member in a department, the department chair and/or program director, the college dean, the dean of the School of Extended Education, the university's Distance Education Review Committee, and the vice president for information technology. This process is outlined in the *Faculty Guide for the Development of Electronic Extended Education Courses* (Exhibit 37 in the resource room).

Depending on the type of degree program being offered electronically, a number of external constituencies may be involved. In Indiana, any degree that is offered to off-campus students through distance education must be reviewed and approved by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education. During the past 18 years, the commission has reviewed and approved four undergraduate degree programs and 11 graduate degree programs offered through distance education from Ball State (see Exhibit 50 in the resource room).

The master of science in nursing curriculum was approved by the School of Nursing, the College Curriculum Committee, the University Graduate Education Committee, and the Office of Academic Systems. The program also has been reviewed by the following external constituencies: the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC), and the National Credentialing Agencies for Nurse Practitioners (automatic approval due to accreditation status per NLNAC), which includes the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners and the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

Within the Department of Industry and Technology, the curriculum and course schedules for the master of arts in technology education and the master of arts in career and technical education were approved by the graduate faculty of the department, the College Curriculum Committee, the University Graduate Education Committee, and

During the past 18 years, the commission has reviewed and approved four undergraduate degree programs and 11 graduate degree programs offered through distance education from Ball State.

the Office of Academic Systems. After these internal approvals, these degree programs were reviewed by the following external constituencies: the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, Technology Educators of Indiana, the International Technology Education Association, and the Council for Technology Teacher Education.

Necessary Approvals Obtained to Implement Proposed Change

Internal Approvals Required and Confirming Documentation

Anytime a department wishes to offer a degree program electronically to off-campus students, a formal process is followed to obtain internal approvals. Approval begins at the department faculty level and progresses to the department chairperson, College Curriculum Committee, college dean, associate director of academic systems, University Graduate or Undergraduate Education Committee, and provost and vice president for academic affairs. This process is outlined in the *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook,* Section IVd (Exhibit 34 in the resource room). In the cases of the master of science in nursing, master of arts in technology education, and master of arts in career and technical education, the initial steps in the process are documented in the *Request for Approval for Changes in Educational Offerings* submitted to the Higher Learning Commission in June 2002 (Exhibit 67 in the resource room).

In the case of programs leading to a teacher education degree, the internal approval process involves the university's Graduate or Undergraduate Professional Education Committee in addition to the Graduate or Undergraduate Education Committee. Documentation of these approvals is available in Exhibit 63 in the resource room.

External Approvals Required and Confirming Documentation

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education must approve all electronic distance education degree programs offered by Ball State to off-campus students throughout the state. These approvals are initiated by a request from the president of the university. The commission has approved 11 graduate degrees and three undergraduate degrees offered by Ball State through distance education. Documentation of these approvals can be found in Exhibit 49 in the resource room.

Additional external approvals may be needed in some disciplines. This was the case with the master of science in nursing program; in March 1999 the NLNAC School of Nursing Accreditation granted approval for this degree to be offered electronically (see Exhibit 57 in the resource room). The College of Business's M.B.A. program was

accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International in 1984, and subsequent evaluations led to reaccreditation in 1991 and 2000.

Finally, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education must first approve all distance education programs offered by the university. The commission most recently approved graduate programs in the Department of Industry and Technology and the School of Physical Education.

Possible Impact of Proposed Change on Challenges Identified by Commission

Two concerns raised in the reaccreditation report of the 1993 evaluation team are related to the proposed change:

"The lack of university-wide, uniform promotion and tenure guidelines and their associated implementation may inhibit the development of the teacher–scholar model."

In the 2000–01 academic year, Ball State developed a template to standardize promotion and tenure guidelines. Now the development of distance education courses is considered evidence of contributions in teaching and service by college promotion and tenure documents.

"The incomplete implementation of the adjustment of teaching loads to establish the teacher-scholar model may impede the quality of improvements and external funding expansion the university seeks."

Faculty members' involvement in the development of electronically offered courses does not impede their ability to be active scholars. Faculty development support is available in the form of assigned time, summer stipends, and financial incentives when the course is actually offered. Also, satellite television and Internet courses are given the same load credit as on-campus courses. The financial incentives available to support electronic course development appear to have been sufficient to attract faculty to develop and deliver electronic courses. These policies and procedures are outlined in the university's *Faculty Guide for the Development of Electronic Extended Education Courses,* available to faculty on the School of Extended Education's Web site and as Exhibit 37 in the resource room.

Institution's Plans to Implement and Sustain Proposed Change

Faculty and Staff Involvement to Accomplish Proposed Change

Faculty members are credentialed according to university guidelines for position and rank. The university's full-time faculty whose credentials are consistent with these guidelines typically teach electronic courses offered through the School of Extended Education (SEE). When contract faculty teach electronic distance education courses, their credentials are reviewed by academic departments to ensure they meet these guidelines. Furthermore, academic departments approve and hire contract faculty to teach for SEE.

Curriculum Development

Department faculty and the college dean approve all curriculum decisions. As is the case with all on-campus courses and programs, faculty ensure that the demonstration of skill development in analysis, comprehension, communications, and research is an essential part of curriculum design. Faculty members also receive design and development assistance for televised and online courses from instructional designers in Ball State's Teleplex and Center for Teaching and Learning Advancement. The CTLA also provides instructional workshops in the design of electronic classes and provides one-on-one assistance at the request of a faculty member. In the case of the master of science in nursing degree, the curriculum for each Internet course was developed and approved by regular nursing faculty and by the School of Nursing Graduate Curriculum Committee. In the case of the master of arts degree in technology education and the master of arts degree in career and technology education, the curriculum for each Internet course was developed and approved by the technology teacher education graduate faculty. The courses and total number of hours for the online master's degree are identical to those of the existing on-campus degree.

Evaluation of Instruction and Programs

The same methods of review are used to evaluate Ball State's on-campus and electronic distance education courses. For example, in the School of Nursing, each semester student evaluations of faculty teaching are administered and tabulated by University Computing Services. Additional student evaluations of courses, online teaching, clinical lab experiences, and distance education support services are administered and tabulated each term through an evaluation process within the School of Nursing. The school's curriculum committees review these evaluations each year. The Internet courses are evaluated every semester on a nine-item, five-point option scale. The scale, a summary of findings, and

peer-reviewed articles describing the process are available as Exhibit 25 in the resource room.

For the master of arts in technology education and the master of arts in career and technology education, student course evaluations are administered in accordance with the procedures outlined in the *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook.* Some individual faculty members have developed additional online instruments for assessing instruction. As is the case with all student course evaluations, these evaluations are used in making faculty tenure and promotion decisions.

The School of Extended Education (SEE), in conjunction with the Office of Academic Assessment and Institutional Research, also conducts a student satisfaction survey. Working with the Graduate School, the OAAIR conducts an annual graduate student exit survey with distance education students and shares the results with SEE. The exit survey is available as Exhibit 42 in the resource room.

Administrative Structure Necessary to Support Proposed Change

The management of distance education courses is shared between individual academic departments and the School of Extended Education (SEE). The content and development of electronic distance education programs is the prerogative of the academic colleges and departments. The same administrative procedures used for developing on-campus courses are used for developing electronic distance education courses. SEE administers the marketing, registration, payment, and enrollment management of the university's electronic distance education courses.

Departmental faculty perform the primary advising function for electronic distance education courses and programs, supplemented by assistance in general advising from the School of Extended Education. After receiving general advising from SEE staff members, students are referred to an appropriate faculty advisor for department-specific advising. Because of the large number of K–12 teachers who enroll in off-campus graduate education courses, SEE also provides one full-time advisor who works closely with the Teachers College in advising K–12 teachers taking courses for licensure and master's degree program completion.

Leadership Role

The overall administrative leadership of distance education at Ball State is the responsibility of the dean of the School of Extended Education. This includes marketing, general advising, registration, receipt of payment, and issuance of Blackboard passwords to distance education students. The dean's staff comprises 16 full-time professional and support staff positions and five part-time student employees.

The school also is responsible for establishing and scheduling classes, contracting with instructors approved and selected by department chairs, and administering the payment of all overloads as well as per-student payments to faculty for teaching electronic distance education courses.

Some departments also have their own individual administrative structures to serve electronic distance education students. Administration for the School of Nursing programs is the responsibility of the school's director and administrative team. This team includes associate program directors, an administrative assistant, and a coordinator of educational resources and extended learning. The master's program is the responsibility of the associate director of the master's program. The program director oversees student admission and progression, curriculum, and policy issues. The administrative leadership of distance education in the School of Nursing is the responsibility of the coordinator of educational resources and extended learning. This includes coordination of the extended learning activities in the School of Nursing with all relevant technical, curriculum, and advising support units, such as the Teleplex, University Computing Services, School of Extended Education, and Library Services plus a support staff and part-time students for the Learning Resource Center of the School of Nursing.

The Department of Industry and Technology's director of distance education is responsible for leadership for the online master's degree programs in that area. The director of distance education serves at the discretion of the department chairperson, is given one-course assigned time to administer the program, and works in collaboration with a graduate academic advisor.

The College of Business has a three-person office in charge of the M.B.A. and graduate business certificate programs. This office includes a faculty member who serves as the full-time assistant to the dean plus a full-time associate director and a full-time administrative coordinator. Overall administration is the responsibility of the assistant to the dean, while the associate director and administrative coordinator handle registration, satellite site management, coordination of examination sites, and troubleshooting of student problems and issues.

Support Services and Learning Resources for Distance Education Students

Student Support Services

The technical requirements and required technical competence for Internet distance education students are listed on the University Computing Services Web site (www.bsu.edu/ucs). Students complete a self-assessment instrument to determine their technology readiness to enroll in a course. Student eligibility for and admission to a distance education course is governed by the same requirements governing on-campus courses.

Assessment data gathered from the university's student satisfaction survey and graduate student exit surveys of distance education students reveal that students are generally satisfied with the distance education courses, programs, and services offered through the School of Extended Education (SEE). In 2001–02, 96 percent of the respondents indicated a very positive or positive attitude toward Ball State and SEE, and 92 percent indicated they would recommend Ball State and SEE to someone interested in higher education (see the *School of Continuing Education Spring 2002 Distance Education Student Satisfaction Survey Report,* available as Exhibit 73 in the resource room). Similar satisfaction levels among distance education graduate students appear in graduate student exit surveys conducted by the Graduate School. General attitudes toward Ball State were very positive or positive for 95.9 percent of the survey respondents, and 84.2 percent indicated they would recommend Ball State to someone who wants to major in their field (see the *2001–2002 Ball State Graduate Student Exit Survey Summary Report,* available as Exhibit 42 in the resource room).

Library Resources

Ball State's University Libraries makes many library resources available to electronic distance education students online, by phone, and through the mail. Services include:

- online delivery of articles in the University Libraries collections
- online delivery of articles from other institutions' collections
- postal delivery of books in the University Libraries collections
- online access to materials on course reserve
- research assistance via "e-mail a librarian" and telephone
- online access to the University Libraries catalog
- online access to many research databases and indexes, including full-text journal articles
- online access to reference guides
- online chat sessions between librarians and distance education students (organized by class)

The 2002 distance education student satisfaction survey indicated a satisfaction rate of 76 percent among responding students regarding access to online library services. University Libraries also provides guidelines for faculty on copyright "do's and don'ts" when creating teaching material for electronic distance education courses.

Academic Advising

Electronic distance education students receive advising from faculty members and administrative personnel in their department of study. The School of Extended Education also offers some general advising assistance to students as a point of first contact. Because student satisfaction levels with regard to distance education advising have tended to fall below the satisfaction levels in other student service areas, off-campus students now can connect to a department advisor electronically through the SEE Web site (www.bsu.edu/distance).

The School of Nursing provides an example of how advising of electronic distance education students is provided to off-campus nursing students. Academic departments and faculty provide advising services to majors in their area. Each student is assigned an academic advisor, available by e-mail and telephone. A student plan of study is developed and maintained on file in a database.

Financial Aid Counseling

Information concerning financial aid is readily available to distance education students through Ball State's Web site (www.bsu.edu/finaid). Counseling services also are available by e-mail and telephone.

Financial Capacity to Implement and Sustain Proposed Change

Ball State clearly supports the electronic distance education programs administered by the School of Extended Education. In the 2001–02 fiscal year, the university invested $4.5 million in distance education, generating income above expenses of $5.2 million (excluding university administrative costs and university overhead). This return on investment ensures the resources are available to sustain distance education programs and services for students.

Ball State has high-quality physical facilities to accommodate its distance education programs. The campus was totally fiber-optic linked as early as 1985, and during this same period a $10 million telecommunications building was erected. The university has two large distance education broadcasting studios and two television studios that also can be used to broadcast distance education courses. These facilities are linked to the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunication System (IHETS), which provides access to more than 300 sites throughout the state. The facilities also are equipped with voice-activated overhead cameras and include directors to assist with on-air and off-air productions.

Colleges and departments also provide financial support and equipment for electronic distance education programs. For example, the School of Nursing is housed in the Cooper Science Complex on the Ball State campus. All distance learning faculty, administrative, and support personnel have fully equipped offices with up-to-date computers and printers. All computers are networked to the university system and have requisite software to support the distance learning program. A fully equipped and up-to-date technical support service unit also is located in the School of Nursing's Learning Resource Center.

All Ball State departments offering electronic distance education programs provide offices, Internet connections, and computers and related equipment to faculty teaching in these programs. Departments also provide each faculty member with adequate hardware and software to effectively deliver electronic instruction.

Timeline for Implementation of Proposed Change

Once the decision to offer a degree program electronically to off-campus students is made by a department and the School of Extended Education, the normal timeline from conception to offering the degree is three years and progresses through the following schedule:

- one year for course curriculum planning and student enrollment projections
- six months for course or degree program internal approval
- six months for course or degree program external approval
- one year for course design, development, and testing

Strategies to Evaluate Proposed Change

Measures for Documenting Achievement of Expected Outcomes

Each academic year Ball State's Office of Academic Assessment and Institutional Research conducts a survey of distance education student satisfaction levels and prepares a summary report of the results (Exhibit 73 in the resource room). The dean of the School of Extended Education and his staff review these results and make appropriate changes in areas where satisfaction ratings are low. For example, the school responded to the lower satisfaction rate for academic advising assistance in the 2001–02 survey by adding an electronic link to university faculty advisors to its Web site (www.bsu.edu/distance).

The School of Nursing has a formal assessment plan based on the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) accreditation criteria. The school's curriculum committee is responsible for presenting all evaluation results to faculty.

Data are collected and presented to both the school and the NLNAC, and the results become the basis for ongoing policy and curriculum revision.

In the Department of Industry and Technology, end-of-course evaluations are administered in every online course for documentation and assessment as well as for course and program improvement. In developing online materials for their students, instructors report that course content has been strengthened and improved as a result of student feedback. The first formal report of the department's online initiatives was planned for summer 2003. During the second developmental and course revision period for the department's electronic offerings, external reviewers familiar with the content of the discipline and with the best practices in online instruction will scrutinize the courses for content validity. Course and programmatic adjustments will be made accordingly.

Integration of Assessment of Student Learning into Assessment Program

The measurement of student performance in distance education courses and programs is the prerogative and responsibility of the academic departments and colleges. The individual unit assessment plans indicate the specific methodology to be used. In many instances, student performance in distance education classes is measured in the same way it is measured in on-campus classes.

For online courses, the university's technology-rich environment allows other options. For example, objective testing of student performance is conducted using the university's proprietary InQsit assessment software as well as software available through Blackboard. Security is provided through password protection and timing devices incorporated into the software. Subjective testing is conducted by attaching document files to e-mail correspondence from students to faculty and by students mailing documents to faculty for evaluation. Yet another option exists in the M.B.A. degree program, where the assessment of student performance includes live, proctored examinations at regional locations throughout the state. Proctors are hired by the College of Business, and testing occurs at locations within a one-hour drive of reception sites.

The *School of Extended Education Assessment Plan* (Exhibit 71 in the resource room) calls for objective and subjective assessment of student satisfaction via the school's distance education survey (referenced above), which is administered by the Office of Academic Assessment and Institutional Research. That office also administers the Ball State Graduate Student Exit Survey. Responses to this survey by distance education students are summarized in a report that is sent to SEE for review and appropriate action.

Students enrolled in the university's distance education offerings, including online courses and programs, are engaged in assessment initiatives comparable to those of their on-campus counterparts. The direct and indirect assessment of learning by distance education students is clearly integrated into the institution's comprehensive assessment program.