INSTITUTION and STATE: University of Illinois at Springfield

TYPE OF REVIEW *(from ESS)*: Staff Recommended Change

STAFF: Karen Solomon

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW: SAS/OP Distance Education Reconciliation Project

CURRENT STIPULATION (Approval of Distance Education Degrees): No prior Commission approval required.

RECOMMENDATION: Prior Commission approval required for online degree programs other than the baccalaureate degree completion and master's degree programs.

STAFF RATIONALE: This wording, verified by staff, is based on a review of the following factors: history, planning, curriculum and instructional design, institutional staffing and faculty support, student support, and evaluation and assessment found in the report, along with understanding the institutional context. Over the last nine years very complete support services have been developed to support both faculty and students in teaching and learning in this mode. As one of the three University of Illinois institutions, UIS also has available to it the support of its other campuses who are engaged in distance education. The University already has six baccalaureate degree completion programs and two masters' programs. If it intends, in the future, to provide four year baccalaureate programs the next visiting team will review the developments of online four year programs during the comprehensive visit.

THE HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400, Chicago, Illinois 60602
800/621-7440 312/263-0456 Fax: 312/263-7462

STAFF PANEL FORM FOR REVIEW
OF DISTANCE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

INSTITUTION: University of Illinois at Springfield
STAFF: Karen Solomon
DATE: January 20, 2006

Review of an institutional report prepared for this panel will be conducted by two or
more Commission Staff to decide whether the proposed change in the institution's
Statement of Affiliation Status with the Commission should be approved. The Staff
recommendation will be forwarded to the Institutional Actions Council for approval.

Please circle yes or no in response to each question and add comments.

1. Does the institution describe its history with distance education?
    YES   NO   COMMENTS:

    The University states that the use of technology for student learning dates back
    to earlier years when offered courses were broadcast over the radio and
    television. Online courses and degree programs started in the mid-1990's at
    all three University of Illinois campuses. In 1997 the University of Illinois
    established the University of Illinois Online as a unit to provide coordination
    and support to the three UI campuses. UIS offered I first online courses in Fall
    1997 and its first online degree program in Fall 1998. The development of
    other online degree programs followed, including six baccalaureate programs
    and two masters programs to date. To date the online undergraduate
    programs are degree completion programs, not entire baccalaureate
    programs.

2. Has the institution engaged in the planning necessary to deliver distance
    education?
    YES   NO   COMMENTS:

    U of I Online provided funding to UIS in 1997 to establish the Office of
    Technology-Enhanced Learning (OTEL) as a unit to assist faculty in the use of
    technology. The report states that OTEL has played a significant role in
    advancing the use of technology in UIS teaching and facilitating the
    development of online courses and degree programs. Technology and online

program offerings are addressed in the university's long-rang vision statements and in the strategic planning process.

A proposal to start an online program is initiated by the academic department that will be responsible for the program. Each proposal is required to address the educational and economic viability of the program. This includes issues such as estimated enrollments and the characteristics of students who will be served.The online programs are also subject to college and Provost approval.

3. Are the curriculum and instructional design elements complete?
   <u>YES</u>   NO   COMMENTS:

The online programs are developed and delivered primarily by the same faculty that offer the comparable on-campus programs. This includes tenured or tenure-track faculty, and in some cases, professionals who have an expertise in the subject matter. Each of the online programs offers all of its required core courses online. A sufficient number of electives to complete the degree are offered online.

4. Does the institution have appropriate staffing and faculty support?
   YES   NO   COMMENTS:

   Faculty interested in teaching on line have various forms of assistance available to help hem prepare and deliver online courses. Staff of OTEL provide workshops and one-on-one assistance to faculty in areas such as how to use he online technology and how to design online courses. The library staff works with faculty to place course reading materials on electronic reserves and to ensure that the use of these materials complies with copyright laws. UIS has hired additional staff to assist in the administration of the online programs. Most have at least one half-time coordinator for the online program. These individuals work directly with the students, assisting with admissions, and working with students on problems or issues they encounter after they are enrolled.

   Maximum targeted enrollment levels have been established for the online sections of a course. The intent is for these classes t have a maximum of 15-25 students, depending on the nature of the course.

5. Does the institution have appropriate student support mechanisms in place?
   YES   NO   COMMENTS:

   At the beginning of each semester the University's technology unit provides training for students on how to use the Blackboard platform. There is also an online tutorial on how to use Blackboard and a list of frequently asked questions. Students (and faculty) have access to a Help Desk that is staffed by individuals knowledgeable in the hardware, software and delivery systems associated with the online programs. Assistance can be obtained via telephone or email. The Help Desk has extended hours in the evenings and weekends. Students who have a disability are encouraged to register with the Office of Disabled Services. This office has a variety of equipment and other products that can assist students with disabilities.

   Students can apply for admission, register for classes, pay bills and apply for financial aid online. Students can access student support services online, including the technology Help Desk, career services, library services and services offered the the Center for Teaching and Learning. They can also view their grades online and communicate with their advisors through email.

6. Has the institution developed evaluation and assessment protocols?
   YES   NO   COMMENTS:

   Each academic program at UIS is expected to develop student learning outcomes and an assessment system for addressing whether those outcomes are being achieved. The student learning outcomes for the online programs are the same as for their on-campus counterpart programs. Results from the

evaluation of student learning outcomes are used to make improvements in the programs.

RECOMMENDATION: Choose a. or b.

___X___a.   That the change and the corresponding alteration in the Statement of Affiliation Status be approved (if appropriate).
REASONS:

The institution has clearly demonstrated that it knows how to develop and deliver online courses and programs. Regular faculty are, for the most part the faculty who deliver online. Over the last nine years very complete support services have been developed to support both faculty and students in teaching and learning in this mode. As one of the three state universities, UIS also has available to it the support of the University of Illinois at Champaign. Assessment in the online courses and programs is the same as those delivered in class. The University already has six baccalaureate degree completion programs and two masters' programs. It intends in the future to provide four year baccalaureate programs by designing and delivering the general education courses online.   It has the ability to do that with the impressive support systems available.

_____b.   That an on-site visit be scheduled to evaluate the change

                    _____ (1) To gather additional information

                    _____ (2) To validate existing information

            REASONS:

Staff Initials: _____MBB_____

STAFF PANEL FORM FOR REVIEW
OF DISTANCE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

INSTITUTION:	University of Illinois at Springfield
STAFF:	Karen Solomon
DATE:	January 20, 2006

Review of an institutional report prepared for this panel will be conducted by two or more Commission Staff to decide whether the proposed change in the institution's Statement of Affiliation Status with the Commission should be approved. The Staff recommendation will be forwarded to the Institutional Actions Council for approval.

Please circle yes or no in response to each question and add comments.

1. Does the institution describe their history with distance education?
    YES   NO   COMMENTS:

The University of Illinois at Springfield's states 1996 as the year when it obtained Commission approval to offer what we now characterize as a hybrid distance education degree in nursing.   Over the years, UIS has developed various online degree programs, now totaling eight--two at the master's level and 6 and the bachelor's level. From all indications, the University has not sought Commission approval to offer any of the programs now listed in its online program inventory, and the nursing program that was its first developed program is not listed among them.

All of the bachelor's level programs are identified as degree completion programs. Two of the program in the inventory the Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy (2004) and the Master of Arts in Teacher Leadership (2000) were created as online programs, rather than as on-ground programs that were mounted online.

The University's description of its online programs provides evidence of internal planning and in-depth discussion, leaving external conversations to an apparent successful application for a Sloan Program grant.

In Fall 2005, online majors accounted for 16 percent of the student head count (15 percent of undergraduate students and 18 percent of graduate students). The headcount of program majors was reported as 737, with the largest enrollments being in the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program   (24 percent) and the Master of Arts in Master Teaching and Leadership (34 percent).

2. Has the institution engaged in the planning necessary to deliver distance education?
    YES   NO   COMMENTS:

    The University's summary of planning activities shows linkages to strategic planning activities and deliberations by various campus organizations, task forces and academic departments. Such entities include the Campus Planning and Budget Committee, the Academic Technology Committee, the Campus Senate, and various administrative and academic units.

    The faculty in the department that will be responsible for developing and implementing the program prepares proposals for online programs. Administrative officials are involved in the review of the online program proposals and ensuring that sufficient resources will be available to develop and sustain the online programs. Information was provided relative to the availability of funds provided through a Sloan Program grant to support start-up expenses; however, no information was provided relative to ongoing projected revenues and expenses.

    There is no evidence, after a reference to an action in 1996, to suggest that University personnel ever considered the requirement that it contact The Higher Learning Commission regarding the offering of additional distance education programs, especially online degree programs. It was noted that there is an item in the "Sloan Grant Proposal Development Guidelines" (Appendix A) that refers to "Issues of accreditation, if applicable." There is no indication that any University unit responded to this item.

3. Are the curriculum and instructional design elements complete?
    YES   NO   COMMENTS:

    For the most part, the University is offering as online degree programs the programs that it offers as on-ground programs, the exception being its Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies degree and its Master of Arts in Master Teaching and Leadership. The area faculty who are responsible for an online program play the lead role in proposing and developing the program and for implementing and evaluating the program. The Office of Technology Enhanced Learning provides assistance to faculty who design and develop a program, linking elements of technical know-how and pedagogical approaches. .

4. Does the institution have appropriate staffing and faculty support?
    YES   NO   COMMENTS:

    The University provides a variety of support mechanisms such as access to
    training about online teaching through the University of Illinois, library support
    for faculty wanting to prepare electronic reserves, persons to serve at least half-
    time as online program coordinators for each involved departmental unit, the
    College of Arts and Science Advisory Group, a Director of Liberal Arts Online
    Programs, and a technology staff.

    No information was provided relative to faculty loading or how online courses
    are figured in the workloads of full-time faculty or the extent to which adjunct
    faculty are used to help deliver instruction. Additional information in this area
    would be helpful.

5. Does the institution have appropriate student support mechanisms in place?
    YES   NO   COMMENTS:

    The University provides most of its business and student services in an online
    format. Among these services are the following: admissions, registration, bill
    payment, financial aid counseling, handbook access, technology Help Desk,
    career services, library services, viewing of grades, communication with
    advisors, and services offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning.

6. Has the institution developed evaluation and assessment protocols?
    YES   NO   COMMENTS:

    The University cited its expectations relative to academic units developing
    student learning outcomes and a system to assess them. Academic units have
    been asked to submit annual reports discussing their respective program
    outcomes, the types of assessment mechanisms used, and how the results
    from these assessments have been used to make improvements in the
    program. No specific assessment results were reported. While recent
    enrollment figures were cited for the various programs, no information was
    provided about persons who have graduated from the degree completion
    programs or other programs that are offered. Additional information about
    students' performance in online degree programs would be helpful.

RECOMMENDATION: Choose a. or b.

    x   a. That the change and the corresponding alteration in the Statement of
            Affiliation Status be approved (if appropriate).
            REASONS:

            The University's current inventory of online programs shows that it is
            using this mode of instructional delivery as a means to help fulfill its
            institutional mission. According to the figures provided, at least 24
            percent of the credit hours generated at the University during the Fall
            2005 semester were generated through online courses.
            Complementary to this figure is the headcount enrollment of 737
            students in online degree programs. Thirty seven percent of the

University's students took at least one online course and 22 percent of the enrolled students were registered exclusively in online courses.

According to the University's report, during the next four years at least eight more online degree programs will be added, making use of funds made available through a Sloan Program grant.

It is not clear that the University's plan to expand it distance education programs necessarily will be delivered in a 100 percent online asynchronous format. Since its bachelor's level degree program offerings are in degree completion formats, there is reason to recommend that the University be required to seek Commission approval should it decide to deliver traditional four-year programs online in an asynchronous format.

_____b.   That an on-site visit be scheduled to evaluate the change

     _____ (1) To gather additional information

     _____ (2) To validate existing information

REASONS:

Staff Initials: _____JAT_____

INSTITUTION and STATE: University of Illinois at Springfield, IL

TYPE OF REVIEW *(from ESS)*: Staff Recommended Change

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW: SAS/OP Distance Education Reconciliation Project

Nature of Organization

LEGAL STATUS: Public

RECOMMENDATION: **No Change**

DEGREES AWARDED: B, M, S, D

RECOMMENDATION: **No Change**

Conditions of Affiliation

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: Accreditation at the Doctor's level is limited to the Doctor of Public Administration degree.

RECOMMENDATION: **No Change**

APPROVAL OF NEW DEGREE SITES: Prior Commission approval required.

RECOMMENDATION: **No Change**

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES: No prior Commission approval required.

RECOMMENDATION: **Prior Commission approval required for online degree programs other than the baccalaureate degree completion and master's degree programs.**

REPORTS REQUIRED: Progress Report: 06/01/2004; on assessmentReport received 06/11/2004.

RECOMMENDATION: **NONE**

OTHER VISITS REQUIRED: None

RECOMMENDATION: **No Change**

Summary of Commission Review

YEAR OF LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 1997 - 1998

Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS
YEAR OF NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2007 - 2008

RECOMMENDATION: No Change

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

INSTITUTION and STATE: University of Illinois at Springfield, IL

TYPE OF REVIEW: Staff Recommended Change

Educational Programs

		Program Distribution	**Recommended Change (+ or -)**
Programs leading to Undergraduate			
	Associate	0	
	Bachelors	21	
Programs leading to Graduate			
	Masters	20	
	Specialist	1	
	First Professional	0	
	Doctoral	1	

Off-Campus Activities

In-State:		Present Activity:	**Recommended Change: (+ or -)**
	Campuses:	None	
	Sites:	Peoria (Peoria Center)	
	Course Locations:	1	

Out-of-State:		Present Wording:	**Recommended Change: (+ or -)**
	Campuses:	None	
	Sites:	None	
	Course Locations:	None	

Out-of-USA:		Present Wording:	**Recommended Change: (+ or -)**
	Campuses:	None	
	Sites:	None	
	Course Locations:	None	

Distance Education Certificate and Degree Offerings:

Present Offerings:

B.A. in English offered via Internet; B.A. in History offered via Internet; B.A. In Liberal Studies offered via Internet; B.A. in Mathematics offered via Internet; B.A. in Philosophy offered via Internet; B.S. in Computer Science offered via Internet; Certificate in Information Assurance offered via Internet; Certificate in Systems Security offered via Internet; Certificate: Career Specialist offered via Internet; M.A. in Educational Leadership offered via Internet; M.S. in Management Information offered via

Internet

Recommended Change:
   (+ or -)

No Change