

ADEC Honorable Mention - Excellence in College and University Distance Education 2002

K-State receives distance education excellence award

The American Distance Education Consortium, a national consortium of land-grant universities, is recognizing two distance education initiatives at K-State for excellence.

The consortium has selected the Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance to receive its Excellence in Distance Education Award. The alliance, an association of human sciences colleges at 10 universities, is coordinated by K-State.

The award, which includes \$5,000 and a trophy, recognizes the alliance's interinstitutional graduate program in family financial planning; the faculty development opportunities provided by the alliance; and the alliance's creation of model policies and practices for distance education alliances.

The consortium also is awarding honorable mention honors for distance education excellence to the master in agribusiness program.

The awards will be presented at a joint meeting of the American Distance Education Consortium, Internet2 and other distance education leaders April 14-16 at Ohio State University.

Alliance members include the College of Human Ecology and human sciences colleges at the following universities: Colorado State, Iowa State, Michigan State, Montana State, Nebraska, North Dakota State, Oklahoma State, South Dakota State and Texas Tech.

Seven of the alliance members are partners in the delivery of an interinstitutional distance education master's degree and postbaccalaureate certificate in family financial planning, said John Grable, assistant professor of family and consumer finances. Grable also is a certified financial planner and director of the certificate program in personal financial planning.

"In its second year, the program has admitted more than 50 students," he said.

The Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance was formed in 1994 to create a marketplace for sharing distance education courses and programs, said Virginia Moxley, associate dean of the College of Human Ecology and chair of the alliance's leadership team. Through the alliance, a student can be admitted to one member institution and study at other member institutions via Internet-based courses. The alliance also serves member institutions by offering faculty development opportunities and recommending standards, policies and practices for distance education.

"The alliance is in the final stage of development of interinstitutional distance education master's degree and certificate programs in youth development and gerontology, and is developing a comprehensive national program devoted to serving the certification needs of family and consumer sciences teachers," Moxley said.

In September 2000 Moxley and Sue Maes, senior development officer for the Kansas Regents Educational Communications Center, received a three-year \$1.07 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's "Learning Anywhere Anytime Partnership Program" to help the alliance create a national model for interinstitutional postbaccalaureate distance education programs. The grant is part of the department's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. Maes and Moxley serve as co-directors of the project.

"Now in its second year, accomplishments from this project include development of business plans for interinstitutional program alliances, alliance by-laws, program memoranda of agreement, financial plans to sustain and scale up the program, marketing surveys, program assessment, faculty development and interinstitutional data sharing and student services," Maes said.

K-State's master in agribusiness program was one of four distance education programs to receive honorable mention honors from the American Distance Education Consortium this year. It's the second year in a row the program has received the honor from the consortium.

The master in agribusiness program, launched in 1998, is the first graduate agribusiness program in the nation to be offered through distance education. It allows agribusiness professionals to earn an advanced degree without career interruption. The program currently has 87 students and 13 alumni. They represent 25 states and seven countries.

The award-winning program also was honored with the 2001 University Continuing Education Association/ Peterson's Award for most innovative distance education program.

"The master in agribusiness program continues to be recognized as one of the premier distance education programs in the world," said Allen Featherstone, professor of agricultural economics. "In April we are launching Comparative Food and Agricultural Systems, which will further broaden the global dimension of the program and allow students to experience distance education without committing to the entire master in agribusiness program."

Distance education courses at K-State are coordinated by the university's Division of Continuing Education.

On the Web

More information about distance education programs is available at <http://www.dce.ksu.edu/dce/distance/index.html>

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