



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

IFAS EXTENSION

University of Florida's Distance Education Resources ¹

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This Extension fact sheet provides you with information about resources available at the University of Florida campus and some last-minute hints as you produce and implement your distance education program. This fact sheet should be read last in the distance education series. Other fact sheets in this series on distance education include *Introduction to Distance Education*, *Instructional Methods for Distance Education*, *Video-Based Distance Education* and *Internet-Based Distance Education*. A for-sale publication titled *The Distance Education Handbook: A Guide for University Faculty* is available through the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences' Educational Media and Services unit. Request publication No. SP 254.

IFAS Educational Media and Services

Faculty members in the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences may wish to consult with **IFAS/Educational Media and Services' Distance Education** unit when they begin developing distance education courses. The unit specializes in video-based distance education production and delivery, such as videotape, interactive video, and satellite. Educational Media and Services oversees

IFAS's Interactive Videoconferencing Network. Personnel will provide guidance from the initial instructional design stage through production and program distribution. For more information, check the IFAS/EMS home page at www.ifas.ufl.edu/~mediaweb/edmedia.html

Instructional Design Center Facilities

The **University of Florida's Instructional Design Center** was established to assist faculty, departments and programs interested in developing Web-based course instruction. The IDC and its staff are available to assist faculty in the areas of course development and training, as well as provide tools and information related to on-line course technology. The IDC represents an expansion of services of the Office of Instructional Resources' Faculty Support Center. IDC staff, including instructional designers, Web programmers and graphic artists, are available to provide training, technical support, and access to equipment that faculty members need for the development of on-line course instruction.

The IDC facility supports PC and Macintosh platforms and operating systems and includes a range

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1. This document is AEC347, one of a series of the Agricultural Education and Communication Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date June 1999. Reviewed June 2003. Visit the EDIS Web Site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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of peripherals such as a digital camera, large screen monitors, flatbed scanners, laser printers, video and audio cassette decks. In addition, IDC development computers have a comprehensive selection of course development software, used to develop and present on-line course content, such as software used for multimedia authoring and development, image creation and editing, digital video and sound acquisition and editing.

While priority is given to faculty members engaged in the development of Web-based courses, the IDC staff and equipment are available for use by any faculty members who are actively working on Internet-based instructional projects. The IDC home page is www.idc.ufl.edu/

Implementing Your New Distance Education Course

As you develop your course, you should take into account such issues as student admission, registration and financial aid. It is helpful to complete as much information as you can about where the course will be delivered. For example, if a site facilitator will be needed, do you know the name of the facilitator? Also, it is beneficial for admissions officials for you to develop your class so that it mirrors the campus calendar. This assists facilitating grade processing and other term-related functions. In addition, you will need to determine how tuition and fees will be paid, transferred, and applied to the appropriate account.

Student admissions questions should be directed to the **University Office of Admission** , (352) 392-1365; **registration** concerns should be forwarded to the **Office of the University Registrar** , (352) 392-1361; and **student financial aid** issues should be sent to the **Office for Student Financial Affairs** , (352) 392-1275.

Distance Education Do's and Don'ts

By following the suggestions in this series of Extension fact sheets on distance education, you should be on your way to designing a highly successful distance education course or program. The following tips are provided as a brief reminder of some distance education do's and don'ts.

DO

- Find out from colleagues who have done distance education courses about the successes and problems they've had. It's important to build a network of people who have taught with distance education technologies and who can serve as mentors. Do your homework.
- Prepare **way** in advance. This can't be emphasized enough. Professors say that this is the one area that affects them the most. A person needs several weeks or months of lead time to prepare a successful course by distance education.
- Learn what resources are available to you.
- Make arrangements for textbooks and other course materials to be provided at college bookstores at remote sites.
- Make yourself available for "virtual" office hours. Allow students to call you during regularly scheduled blocks of time at your office.
- Be prepared for technical glitches. Have a backup plan in case something goes wrong.
- Incorporate several media into your presentations (slides/pictures, video, telephone conversations, audio). And then take these same materials to your regular classroom when you're done.
- Pause more than in a traditional class. Give the distant students time to ask questions.
- Rehearse with the production crew.
- Plan interactive techniques.

DON'T

- Wait until the last minute. You may have others on the distance education production team relying on you to get materials to them in a timely manner.
- Act like the "Lone Ranger." Rely on others who have expertise in other areas (television production, computer technology, instructional design) to help you.

- Try to do a distance education course as just "another" course. It takes more time to prepare.