

**Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities  
Jesuit Distance Education Network**

**Distance Education Demonstration Program  
JesuitNET Proposal for Participation  
July 2001 - June 2004**

The U.S. Department of Education's **Distance Education Demonstration Program** will determine the Federal statutory and regulatory requirements that should be altered to provide greater student access to distance education programs. Under the program, participating institutions may offer Title IV, HEA program funds to students enrolled in educational programs utilizing distance education delivery methods for all or a portion of their classes without being subject to certain statutory and regulatory provisions, which may be waived. The purpose of these waivers is to test new ways of administering the Federal student assistance programs and to consider how the law and regulations might be altered to allow for expansion of aid to distance students and still ensure program integrity. A primary purpose of the program is to test the quality and viability of expanded distance education.

Fifteen institutions and consortia were selected as demonstration projects in 1999. The Secretary of Education will select an additional 35 projects in mid-2001. JesuitNET has submitted a proposal for this second round of demonstration projects. While demonstration projects receive no additional funding, participation represents an opportunity to shape future Federal educational policy and financial aid regulations affecting millions of distance education students.

**SUMMARY OF DEMONSTRATION PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

If selected for participation, the JesuitNET demonstration project intends to use its LAAP and Congressional Grant projects to support rigorous student competency assessment and true on-demand course delivery as alternatives to the following traditional contact time and standard term methods for determining aid eligibility.

**5.1 Academic Year**

**Regulations: 34 CFR 668.2**

Defines an academic year as (1) a period that begins on the first day of classes and ends on the last day of classes or examinations and that is a minimum of 30 weeks of instructional time during which, for an undergraduate educational program, a full-time student is expected to complete at least (i) twenty-four semester or trimester or 36 quarter hours in an educational program whose length is measured in credit hours; or (ii) nine hundred clock hours in an educational program whose length is measured in clock hours.

**Alternative:**

JesuitNET will develop, in conjunction with the Department, a competency-attainment equivalent to defining an academic year that is currently determined by time-based measures of program instruction and completion.

**5.2 Eligible Program**

**Statutes: Section 481(b) of the HEA**

Defines eligible program as a program of at least (B) 300 clock hours of instruction, 8 semester hours, or 12 hours, offered during a minimum of 10 weeks, in the case of (i) an undergraduate program that requires the equivalent of an associate degree for admissions; or (ii) a graduate or professional program.

**Alternative:**

JesuitNET will develop, in conjunction with the Department, a competency-attainment equivalent to defining an eligible program that is currently determined by time-based measures of program instruction and completion.

**5.3 Eligible Program**

**Regulations: 34 CFR 668.8(c)(3)**

Defines a week of instruction, (i) for an educational program using a semester, trimester, or quarter system or an educational program using clock hours, to be any week in which at least one day of regularly scheduled instruction, examinations, or preparation for examinations; or (ii) for an educational program using credit hours but not using a semester, trimester, or quarter system, to be any week in which at least 12 hours of regularly scheduled instruction, examination, or preparation for examinations occurs.

**Alternative:**

JesuitNET will develop, in conjunction with the Department, one or more student course participation models that will serve as effective online equivalents to traditional Carnegie Unit measures of classroom instruction and out of class work.

**5.4 Satisfactory Academic Progress**

**Regulations: 34 CFR 668.16(e)(2)**

Defines as reasonable those standards for measuring whether an otherwise eligible student is maintaining satisfactory progress in his or her educational program if the standards include (ii) a quantitative component that consists of a maximum timeframe in which a student must complete his or her educational program. The timeframe must (A) for an undergraduate program, be no longer than 150 percent of the published length of the educational program measured in academic years, terms, credit hours attempted, clock hours completed, etc. as appropriate.

**Alternative:**

JesuitNET will develop, in conjunction with the Department, a new model for program length and academic progress based upon measured student attainment of curriculum competencies across courses appropriate for full-time and half-time matriculation. This model will define broad maximum and minimum timeframes for program completion.