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ABSTRACT

Distance education strategies offer the potential to overcome barriers of time and distance. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries have been providing an array of services to distant learners enrolled in UNL graduate degree programs. This paper reviews the services that the UNL Libraries have developed, describes current objectives, and discusses the role of the Libraries in the University's planning process for distance education. The three components of the University Libraries' distance education program are: (1) remote access to electronic resources; (2) liaison librarian for reference assistance and instruction; and (3) delivery of materials to distance education students, mainly through interlibrary loan. Technological changes are affecting librarians, teaching faculty, and distant students. As the UNL Libraries partner with other units within the University and the state, they are well-positioned to respond to technological change and deliver high quality service to distance education students. Three appendices include two flyers on library services to UNL distance education students, and a list of handouts distributed to distance education students for the 1996 summer session. (Author/SWC)

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"Library Support for UNL Distant Learners"
Kate Adams, Distance Education Coordinator
University Libraries
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

ED 399 962

How does higher education's bricks and mortar address the growing demand for lifelong learning? Distance education strategies offer the potential to overcome barriers of time and distance. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries have been providing an array of services to distant learners enrolled in UNL graduate degree programs. This paper will review the services that the UNL Libraries have developed. Current objectives will be described. Also, the role of the Libraries in the University's planning process for distance education will be discussed.

Introduction

Distance education, distant learner, virtual campus, non-traditional learner. These concepts are mentioned frequently in higher education these days. "Accelerating social, economic, demographic, and technological changes are forcing continuous reexamination of how we deliver education. Perhaps nowhere are the effects of change more evident than in graduate education."¹

We are familiar with the myriad reasons for students pursuing higher education and graduate degrees -- individuals are seeking retraining, professional advancement, and/or personal development, in an era of increasing complexity in jobs and the "transition to a new economy based on the use of knowledge and information."² These reasons, coupled with powerful technologies that allow delivery of education to a dispersed student population, lay behind the expansion of distance education.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln actively supports distant learners and teaching faculty who teach courses

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

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delivered to remote students. The Division of Continuing Studies is the major administrative unit involved in course delivery and instructional support for students in several graduate degree programs.

The Libraries' Developing Role with Distance Education

Students

The University Libraries became a partner in the University's distance education program in spring 1990 as a result of discussions between then Dean of Libraries Kent Hendrickson and then Dean of Division of Continuing Studies Robert Simerly. At that time, the Division of Continuing Studies had been delivering graduate courses through CorpNet to students in engineering. CorpNet is a corporate training and education network delivering academic instruction, both workshops and courses, via Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS) and other technologies. CorpNet began in 1986, with courses in two engineering subdisciplines, with receiving sites in Lincoln and Omaha.

In 1990, technological change was imminent for delivery of courses to distant learners in Nebraska. June 22, 1990 would mark the dedication of NEB*SAT, network delivery of both educational and public service broadcasting over a leased satellite transponder. NEB*SAT is Nebraska's multiple channel satellite and optical fiber educational telecommunications network. NEB*SAT would extend delivery of courses to public sites typically located in community colleges.

There was anticipated growth of academic instruction to distant learners in spring 1990. Plans were well underway for an education center to be called Grand Island College Park. Delivery of a Master's of Business Administration degree was scheduled to begin in fall 1991, with students receiving classes delivered to Chadron and Scottsbluff.

Dean Hendrickson formed an ad hoc committee composed of four UNL librarians (Kate Adams, Rebecca Bernthal, Tracy Bicknell-Holmes, and Debra Pearson) in May 1990, with a charge to write a report recommending how the University Libraries should serve UNL distant learners. The committee's report, entitled "Library Services to Division of Continuing Studies," was completed by the end of July. The report emphasized the need for technological and philosophical support, specifically access via Huskernet to IRIS (the UNL online public access catalog), availability of CD ROM workstations, and tele-facsimile. The report recommended there be a contact person at each education center or downlink site.

The role of the University Libraries was also outlined. The UNL Interlibrary Loan office would provide delivery of materials to distant students. Liaison librarians (librarians assigned to academic departments) would serve as contacts for distant learners and teaching faculty, provide reference assistance, and perform mediated computer searches.

The report and its recommendations was accepted by library administration. Kate Adams, Chair of General Services Department, was assigned coordinating responsibility.

Basic Assumptions of the UNL Libraries' Program

The foundation of the Libraries' distance education (DE) program is the "ACRL Guidelines For Extended Campus Library Services," prepared by the Task Force to Review the Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services, and published by the American Library Association in 1990.³ The basic assumptions of the Libraries' DE program are:

1. The University Libraries have the primary responsibility for providing library services to UNL DE students.
2. Services to distant learners are based on academic course requirements.
3. Effective and appropriate services for distant learners may differ from services offered to on-campus students. At the same time, the Libraries offer equitable provision of library services to UNL DE students.
4. Resources and services of local libraries may be used to support information needs of UNL DE students.

The Libraries' distance education program was ready to be implemented. As the program began, it was recognized that the engineering courses delivered to the CorpNet students typically did not utilize library services or resources.

In fall 1991, the joint UNL-Chadron State University master's degree in business administration was started, with the delivery of core courses. However, with less than a dozen remote students, the impact on service delivery was modest.

One of the 1990 report's recommendations had been to publicize the Libraries' services to distant students. In 1992, an ad hoc library committee developed a three-fold brochure outlining library services to distant learners.

Production was simple -- the brochure was word processed, laser printed, photocopied, and manually folded. The brochure was distributed to all DE students.

In December 1992, the Libraries established Infomail, an electronic mail account, to answer quick reference questions from DE students. Library reference service was electronic!

Library services to DE students at this time were basic. Liaison librarians conducted reference service and mediated computer searches, with remote students contacting the liaison librarians by telephone or electronic mail. Circulation staff issued laminated library cards to DE students and entered patron information in the IRIS database. DE students requested library materials through interlibrary loan by filling out the standard interlibrary loan multi-part request form and mailing the form to the Interlibrary Loan office.

Distance education students seldom took advantage of the Libraries' services. Less than one dozen items for DE students were requested through interlibrary loan in 1991/92. There was no use of Infomail, the electronic reference account, in its first year of operation. Service to the distant learner -- and how to increase use of the library services by this group -- was an ongoing objective. The Libraries did not work on this alone.

Effective Partnership with the Division of Continuing Studies

From the outset of the Libraries' service to distant learners, the Distance Education Coordinator worked in

partnership with the Division of Continuing Studies. The contact person at the Division for most of the time has been Nancy Aden, a Program Specialist. (She currently is Interim Director of Department of Academic Telecommunications.) The Program Specialist provides the Libraries with class rosters and course syllabi, and routinely refers DE faculty and students to the Libraries for service. The DE Coordinator provides the Division with library handouts, with the Division handling the photoduplication and mailing of those materials to remote students and downlink sites.

In August 1992, the Division held its first televised orientation session to CorpNet students. This presentation was videotaped for distribution to downlink sites. As part of the orientation, the Distance Education Coordinator gave an overview of library services, such as how to obtain library materials and mediated computer searches. Other presenters addressed issues such as classroom interconnectivity, computer access through Huskernet, and interactivity in the remote classroom. Students called in with a variety of questions. The orientation session has been given annually since its inception.

Partnership with the Division included other outreach activities. In spring 1993, the DE Coordinator prepared text for the Nebraska CorpNet handbook, describing library services to distant students. The DE Coordinator also established contacts via phone and letters with contact staff at downlink

sites, and together with the Program Specialist conducted a site visit to Grand Island College Park.

Growth in distance education activity did occur! In spring 1993, the Dean of Teacher's College met with the Distance Education Coordinator and the education liaison librarian, Carla Rosenquist-Buhler, to discuss plans to deliver a doctoral degree in Educational Administration/ Curriculum and Instruction to remote students in Nebraska. The "western cohort" of approximately two dozen students started classes in fall 1993, with classes delivered to downlink sites in Chadron, North Platte, and Scottsbluff.

Then, the College of Journalism and Mass Communications initiated delivery of master's degree to remote students in fall semester 1994. The DE Coordinator and the Journalism liaison librarian, Jeanetta Drueke, met with the teaching faculty as course syllabi were being developed. In fall 1994, enrollments were 12 and 18 students in two courses. In spring 1995, enrollments numbered 19 and 13. Courses were delivered to students in six sites: Chadron, Grand Island, Norfolk, North Platte, Scottsbluff, and Sioux City.

Administrative support for the distance education courses from four UNL colleges -- Engineering, Teachers, Journalism, and Business Administration -- was handled through the Division of Continuing Studies. In spring 1994, another administrative entity entered the distance education arena. The College of Human Resources and Family Sciences (HRFS) met with the DE Coordinator and the Home Economics liaison

librarian, Rebecca Bernthal, to discuss plans for an interdepartmental master's degree in home economics to be delivered to distant learners.

This master's degree program would begin with significantly higher enrollments -- roughly 90 students during the fall of 1994, and 60 students in spring 1995. During the first year, HRFS delivered one course per semester to 24 sites throughout Nebraska. Two courses were offered during summer of 1995, and two courses each semester since fall 1995.

For several years, UNL distance education activities had been referred to as CorpNet courses. CorpNet had been started as distance education course delivery to the corporate world, primarily in engineering areas. With the addition of courses in Educational Administration and Journalism, the concept was blurred. By 1994/95, distance education could also refer to home economics courses.

In spring 1995, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln adopted NUserv as an umbrella term. This term was designed to provide name recognition as well as to provide overall coordination of delivery of distance education degree programs.

Library Services for Distance Education Students

Administratively, the Distance Education Coordinator oversees the program. She coordinates with liaison librarians, oversees delivery of materials via Interlibrary Loan, and serves as resource person to teaching faculty as

well as DE students. Printed resource materials are delivered to each DE student and DE teaching faculty, as well as to contact staff at downlink sites. Through partnership with the administrative units and teaching faculty, the Distance Education Coordinator is the visible contact person for library services to distant learners.

An overview of the library services is described in the text handout (Appendix A) and flyer (Appendix B), both titled "Library Services to UNL Distance Education Students." These handouts replaced the brochures in spring 1995. For both handouts, the colors are changed each semester and summer session, to alert the user to the most current handout.

Each semester, and now every summer session, the DE Coordinator prepares a packet of materials for distribution via the administrative unit. Print resources are vitally important to the distant learner. The printed page provides current policies and procedures as well as descriptions of services. In addition to colored-paper handouts, the Coordinator provides copies of a dozen handouts prepared by the Libraries' handouts committee. (Appendix C is a list of those handouts.) The library-wide handouts are revised annually, or more often, as electronic databases and services change and evolve.

The three components of the University Libraries' distance education program are (1) remote access to electronic resources, (2) liaison librarian for reference assistance and

instruction, and (3) delivery of materials. Each component will be discussed in some detail.

Remote Access to Electronic Resources

Electronic access is key to accessing library services. Electronic resources are available to UNL distance education students through University-affiliated computer accounts. Via the computer, the student has access to IRIS, the Innovative Research Information System, which is the Libraries' electronic information resources collection. The "IRIS: Remote Access" handout describes dialing in, computer accounts, and how to handle dialing-in problems.

The "IRIS: What is IRIS?" handout provides a helpful overview of the computerized gateway to information, describing the main menu on IRIS, the online public access catalog, article indexes and specialized databases, and e-journals and full-text materials. Resource-specific handouts such as Expanded Academic Index, Expanded Academic Index - ASAP, Specialized Databases Network, and UnCover describe those electronic resources in greater detail.

Liaison Librarian for Reference Assistance and Instruction

The liaison librarian is the DE student's key resource person for reference. The liaison librarian provides assistance in formulating search strategies, answers reference questions, provides instruction in electronic resources and print materials, and addresses a wide range of technological

skills in assisting students with dialing in, using electronic mail, navigating the Internet, and searching the databases.

The liaison librarian also conducts formal instruction within the satellite-linked classroom. That instruction may be an online demonstration of basic searching of the online catalog, or an hour-long presentation on the Specialized Databases Network, Expanded Academic Index, and UnCover.

The Distance Education Coordinator encourages the teaching faculty to arrange for the liaison librarian to provide instruction. The UNL DE program relies on liaison librarians and library handouts to describe instruction and delivery.

Delivery of Materials to DE Students

The library card is the DE student's key to request services and materials. When the student completes the Distance Education User Information form, staff in Circulation create patron record and mail a laminated library card to the student. The library card serves as identification for the DE student who can participate in reciprocal borrowing at 32 institutions within Nebraska.

Delivery of materials to DE students is handled through Interlibrary Loan. The remote student may place requests by mail, by fax, or electronically. (Electronic requesting of interlibrary loan material has been available to all University of Nebraska-Lincoln users since fall of 1994.)

The majority of DE requests are supplied from the collections at the UNL Libraries. The remote student typically receives the material within two weeks from date of request. The student may also request to borrow items from other libraries, with an additional two week (or longer) turnaround time.

Interlibrary Loan staff send photocopied materials directly to the distant student through federal mail. Selected articles may be supplied by fax delivery. Books and other returnable materials are sent to the downlink site for the student to pick up.

Currently, the University Libraries absorb the costs of photocopying articles for DE students. Fax delivery of articles from UnCover is also partially subsidized. The Libraries cover postage costs for outgoing returnable materials to DE students, while the student or downlink site is responsible for return postage costs.

A specialized service for the doctoral students in the doctoral program in Educational Administration/Curriculum and Instruction provides copying of ERIC Document materials. To date the Libraries has passed along the reproduction costs to the student. Use of this service has been minimal.

While the University Libraries' service to UNL distant education students assumes that the UNL Libraries have primary responsibility, we also assume that remote students may choose to use other libraries. Thus, the Reciprocal Borrowing handout is distributed to DE students.

The Distance Education Coordinator contacts the reciprocal libraries when there is anticipated use by UNL DE students. For example, Western Nebraska Community College in Scottsbluff holds several years of ERIC on CD ROM. The DE Coordinator consulted with WNCC staff about the potential demand from the education doctoral students.

Addressing the Changing Face of Distance Education

At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, several administrative reports have addressed issues such as delivery, course duplication, technological costs, and instruction to distance education students. In anticipation of the Western Governors meeting in Omaha held in June 1996, the University of Nebraska prepared a statement on the Nebraska Virtual Learning Community.

Recently, there has been a welcome increase in University support for faculty who teach distance education courses. The UNL Teaching and Learning Center has offered workshops on the World Wide Web and pedagogical strategies useful for delivering instruction to remote students. The Information Technology Group also regularly provides workshops, and a Distance Education Interest Group open to faculty and staff has been formed.

Within the University Libraries, the Distance Education Coordinator has assumed responsibility for distance education activities on a .5 FTE basis as of October 1, 1995. With

the increased time in support of distance education, the Coordinator has participated in a NEB*SAT grant to create and maintain a clearinghouse on Internet user education materials, and has delivered presentations to teaching faculty at distance education workshops. A review of distance education objectives for 1995/96 illustrates the scope of the Libraries' activity.

1. Expand contacts with University administrators, offices, and faculty regarding library support for distance education.
2. Strengthen relationships with downlink sites.
3. Investigate possibility of delivering materials to downlink sites via Federal Express.
4. Conduct needs assessment by surveying DE students. This is in the planning stages.

In close, this is a dynamic time for the Libraries as we serve distance education students. Technological changes are affecting librarians, teaching faculty, and distant students. As the Libraries partner with other units within the University and the state, we are well-positioned to respond to technological change and deliver high quality service to distance education students.

Notes

1. Craig D. Swenson, "Graduate Degree Programs and Distance Education," in Mark H. Rossman and Maxine E. Rossman, eds., *Facilitating Distance Education* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1995): 51.
2. Ibid.
3. "ACRL Guidelines For Extended Campus Library Services," prepared by the Task Force to Review the Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services, *College & Research Libraries News* 51 (April 1990):353-55.

LIBRARY SERVICES TO UNL DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS

University Libraries University of Nebraska-Lincoln Summer Sessions 1996

The University Libraries of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln provide service to UNL distance education students. There are three major components of the Libraries' distance education program -- remote access to electronic resources, liaison librarian contact for the provision of reference assistance and instruction, and delivery of materials.

REMOTE ACCESS

Remote access to electronic resources is key. Distance education students can access the Libraries' Innovative Research Information System (IRIS) via a University affiliated computer account. IRIS provides access to the online public access catalog (UNL Libraries Catalog), *Expanded Academic Index*, *UnCover*, *Specialized Databases Network*, GPO Wais (selected Federal resources), World Wide Web via Lynx, and Nebraska Library Catalogs. The menu of electronic resources is continually expanding and changing.

LIAISON LIBRARIANS

Within the University Libraries, liaison librarians are assigned to work with academic departments. The liaison librarian responsible for your subject area provides instruction in various electronic resources and traditional reference materials. The liaison librarian can help you identify sources for your research and assist you in starting your research.

Your liaison librarian can also conduct a computer search upon request. By accessing remote online databases, the librarian retrieves titles of journal articles and other citations, and sometimes also abstracts, on the topic of your choice. There are costs involved with a librarian-assisted search, depending on the databases searched.

General reference service is also available via:

infomail@unllib.unl.edu This e-mail address is checked twice a day, Monday - Friday. Responses will generally be sent within 24 - 48 hours.

DELIVERY OF MATERIALS

The Interlibrary Loan Office handles deliveries of materials to distance education students.

To use these services, you must have a current library card; to receive a card, complete a Distance Education User Information form and return it to the University Libraries. Contact the Distance Education Coordinator for a copy of this form. The form is also available in the NUserv Catalog. The Libraries will send a laminated library card to you.

You may place interlibrary loan requests electronically via getform@unllib.unl.edu, by fax, or mail. You must fill out an interlibrary loan request form for each item you need. The Interlibrary Loan Office hours are Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Central Time. Interlibrary Loan Office phone number is (402) 472-2522.

If you want to borrow materials only from the UNL collection, indicate that on the request form. Generally, turnaround time for UNL materials is two weeks from the day Interlibrary Loan receives the request until you receive the item.

The checkout period for books borrowed from the UNL Libraries through Interlibrary Loan is four weeks. The checkout period for books borrowed from other libraries through Interlibrary Loan is usually four weeks, but is determined by the other library. Books will be sent to a downlink site for you to pick up, as Interlibrary Loan does not supply books directly to borrowers. Photocopied materials will be sent directly to you via fax or U.S. mail.

UNL Interlibrary Loan can also borrow materials from other libraries. You will need to allow an additional 2 to 3 weeks for materials located at libraries other than UNL.

WHEN ON THE UNL CAMPUS

When you visit the University campus, you are welcome to use the collections of the University Libraries. Love Library, the main library, is located on City Campus at 13th and R streets. The library system also includes nine branch libraries, including C.Y. Thompson Library on East Campus.

We encourage you to stop in and meet your liaison librarian and the Distance Education Coordinator. Appointments made in advance are recommended, but are not required.

Since you are taking classes through UNL, the UNL Libraries should serve as your primary research facilities. However, you also have other resources to utilize. The UNL library card serves as identification should you wish to use the services available at 32 reciprocal borrowing institutions in Nebraska. Consult the Reciprocal Borrowing handout for details. It is important to realize that the reciprocal institutions represent several different types of libraries, with different resources and levels of service. Few, if any, may meet all of your needs.

HELPFUL HINTS

- ↔ Check IRIS for availability of materials. Some materials may not be available as they are already checked out.
- ↔ Be sure to state the specific name and city of your downlink site when requesting materials.
- ↔ Obtaining materials for research takes time. Plan ahead, and allow time for your requested materials to be delivered to you.
- ↔ During semester breaks and summer, library hours vary. Consult the "Hours and Calendar" handouts for Love Library and the branch libraries.

If you have comments or suggestions about the Libraries' service to distance education students, contact Kate Adams, Distance Education Coordinator, katea@unllib.unl.edu or (402) 472-2560.

Information on this sheet is periodically updated and revised by staff at the University Libraries, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. If you have questions concerning this information, please contact Kate Adams, (402) 472-2560, or e-mail: katea@unllib.unl.edu



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University Libraries
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Library Services to UNL Distance Education Students
Summer Sessions 1996

Contact your Liaison Librarian:

- Educational Administration/Curriculum & Instruction
Kevin Spradlin, Interim kevins@unllib.unl.edu
(402) 472-2525

- College of Journalism and Mass Communications
Jeanetta Druke jeanetta@unllib.unl.edu
(402) 472-2525

- Engineering
Alan Gould alang@unllib.unl.edu
(402) 472-3411

- College of Human Resources and Family Sciences
Rebecca Bernthal rebecca@unllib.unl.edu
(402) 472-4404

- Distance Education Coordinator
Kate Adams katea@unllib.unl.edu
(402) 472-2560

Electronic services via IRIS include:

Dial into your e-mail account and choose "Libraries" from the main menu to access the UNL Libraries Catalog, Expanded Academic Index, UnCover, Specialized Databases Network, World Wide Web via Lynx, the Internet, and more.

infomail@unllib.unl.edu for reference assistance

getform@unllib.unl.edu to request a blank interlibrary
loan form

Other ways to reach us if you have questions about our services:

Reference Desk	(Love)	(402) 472-2848
Reference Desk	(C.Y. Thompson)	(402) 472-4407
Interlibrary Loan		(402) 472-2522
Fax		(402) 472-5131

The Interlibrary Loan office handles deliveries of materials to distance education students. Interlibrary Loan is open Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time. Service hours among the University Libraries may vary.

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Appendix C

List of Handouts Distributed to Distance Education Students for Summer Sessions 1996

LIBRARY SERVICES TO UNL DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS
(summer sessions 1996)

Library Services to UNL Distance Education Students
[flyer] (summer sessions 1996)

UNL Libraries Distance Education User Information Form
(April 1995)

UNL Libraries Catalog (March 1996)

IRIS: What is IRIS? (March 1996)

IRIS: Remote Access (December 1995)

Expanded Academic Index (December 1995)

Expanded Academic Index - ASAP (March 1996)

Specialized Databases Network Dial-In Access
(Dec. 1995)

UnCover (December 1995)

FirstSearch (December 1995)

Computer Search: Fee-Based (March 1996)

Interlibrary Loan: Electronic Requests (August 1995)

Infomail (August 1995)

Reciprocal Borrowing (December 1995)

UNL Libraries Distance Education Loan/Article Request
(February 1996)

Hours & Calendar Summer 1996 Love Library (April 1996)

Hours & Calendar Summer 1996 Branch Libraries (May
1996)

The majority of handouts have been prepared by the University Libraries Handouts Committee. Distance Education handouts have been created by the Distance Education Coordinator and staff.

Kate Adams, Distance Education Coordinator
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