

**State University System of Florida  
Distance Learning  
2009-2010 Budget**

**Total Budget Need: \$359,207**

**Purpose:**

Provides leadership and coordination of distance learning activities for Florida's educational system by spearheading statewide initiatives and facilitating cross-institutional communication.

The 2008-2009 Legislature created through HB 7105 the Florida Distance Learning Task Force with a broad range of study assignments due by March 1, 2009. The Florida Distance Learning Task Force is established to make recommendations to facilitate access to undergraduate distance learning resources that enable public postsecondary educational institutions to fulfill their missions while contributing to and sharing in the distance learning resources of the Florida Distance Learning Consortium. The task force will undertake its work over the 2008-2009 with recommendations for further action in 2009-2010 and beyond.

The legislation also established in statute the Florida Higher Education Distance Learning Catalog and assigned operational oversight to the Florida Distance Learning Consortium. All colleges and universities must list any distance learning courses for which the newly authorized distance learning fee will be assessed in the online catalog. Last year the catalog listed over 14,000 courses. Consortium staff has operated the catalog since 1996 however the new listing requirements will increase the demand for support and services from existing staff. The legislation requires the Consortium staff to monitor the listings and ensure their compliance with operational guidelines and adherence to appropriate accreditation standards and procedures.

**Program Description:**

In July 2003, the Florida Distance Learning Consortium (the Consortium) was formed by combining the resources of two separate but related organizations: the Florida Community College Distance Learning Consortium (established in 1996) and the Florida Virtual Campus (established in 1998). The Consortium's purpose is to provide strong distance learning leadership for Florida's PreK-20 educational system. It achieves this objective by spearheading statewide initiatives and facilitating cross-institutional communication, thereby championing the interests of its membership institutions. Any community college can participate in Consortium activities and utilize Consortium services. Institution representatives are appointed to the Consortium by the President of each member college.

**Enhancement:**

The Consortium is building on 11 years of progressive successes in the community college and university distance learning arenas. Ongoing efforts include:

- Consolidated purchasing of distance learning products,
- Statewide coordination of distance learning initiatives,
- Hosted learning platforms,
- Electronic distance learning course catalog for student access, and
- Leadership for national and state distance learning initiatives.

Among other accomplishments, the Consortium routinely realizes over \$1 million in annual savings for the State of Florida as a result of consolidated statewide licensing agreements. Distance learning and classroom instruction continue to dramatically change as technology evolves and revolutionizes how, when, and where instruction is delivered. Students' growing demand for technology-based instruction is reflected by Florida's significant growth in post-secondary distance learning headcounts since 1998. Likewise, the Consortium and the services it supports have continued to advance and increase in scope and depth. As new technologies emerge, basic core functions (e.g., online catalog of distance learning courses) are maturing while new services (e.g., statewide repository of learning resources) are being sought by Consortium members.