

December 10, 2012

Dr. Frank T. Brogan, Chancellor  
State University System of Florida  
325 W. Gaines Street, # 1614  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Chancellor Brogan:

The SUS Council of Academic Vice Presidents (CAVP), the Provosts, has followed closely and with great interest the development of the Parthenon Report on Distance Learning. We are appreciative that the CAVP was kept informed of the process and had opportunity to contribute to it.

In a conference call held on 29 November, the CAVP, along with members of their staffs, engaged in a discussion regarding the final report. The consolidated results of that discussion are provided herein as our formal input in support of the planned December 17 meeting of the strategic planning committee of the Board of Governors (BOG). It is our expressed purpose that this input be of value to the BOG as it considers the best strategies to achieve expanded distance learning opportunities in support of the mission and vision of the Florida SUS.

#### Consideration of 4 options

The CAVP favors Options 2 and 3, individually, as well as the potential of a plan that hybridizes the two options so as to maximize the potential advantage of each.

With regard to Option 4 (separate new university) we have serious concerns regarding the comparative high entry costs, predicted competition with well-established DL programs already in place across the extant SUS institutions, extended path to accreditation, low persistence rates, transfer complications, and expanded bureaucracy.

With regard to option 1 (expansion of DL programs on an institution-by-institution basis), we believe that while such an effort could be mounted, and indeed, each institution has been active in providing DL, this option is limited in achieving various efficiencies and scalabilities as compared to Options 2 & 3.

#### Remaining questions

It is expected that a document with the scope, scale, and heft of that of the Parthenon Report, answers many questions, leaves some unanswered, and raises new questions. We believe that the following questions require further attention.

- 1) What is (are) the specific objectives(s) of the effort to substantially expand SUS DL opportunities and how are these objectives to be met?
- 2) How will tuition cost be established if different from the current rate structure?
- 3) Will DL students be subsidized as current students?

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- 4) How will current mandated transferability of courses be addressed?
- 5) How will tracking of students be accomplished?
- 6) How will revenues and expenditures be shared among the system?
- 7) How will the preferred option enhance and not threaten the considerable investment in existing extensive DL Offerings across the SUS?
- 8) Which institution, under same options, will actually award the degree?
- 9) What accreditation issues may need to be reviewed?

We hope that our feedback is of value to you and the BOG as this important process moves forward.

Respectfully submitted for the CAVP,



Dr. Ronald B. Toll  
Chair, CAVP  
Provost and VPAA, FGCU

CC: Jan M. Ignash, Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs, FL Board of Governors