Frederick Community College
Distance Learning
Business Plan FY 03-06

I. Introduction

Distance learning is an integral component of instruction that depends on technology for delivery. As a delivery method for instruction, distance learning at FCC is designed to expand and enhance credit and non-credit distance learning offerings, including courses, degree and certificate programs, and workforce training. Recognizing both the challenge and the opportunity, Frederick Community College plans to consolidate all college distance learning activities, including the office for Instructional Technology and the office for Instructional Technology, within the Distance Learning Center (DLC). Specifically, the office for Distance Learning was charged with developing, scheduling, and promoting telecourses, online courses and interactive video courses; and, increasing degree opportunities for distance learning students, particularly through online courses. The College listed its first online course in the spring semester 1998. The number of online courses has grown to 25 in the fall of 2002 and the college will offer two online degrees as of Spring 2003.

The development of online degrees, triggered the submission a Notification of Substantial Change to Middle State. The college is submitting the FY-03 Distance Learning Business Plan as part of its Notification of Substantial Change report. The plan captures the current status of distance learning and provides a blueprint for future distance learning initiatives. This document is dynamic and will be updated annually to preserve its value as a planning document.

II. Vision and Mission

College Vision

Frederick Community College will be a premier Learning College, a student centered system of relationships that facilitates, values, and measures learning. In brief, FCC will place Student Learning first.

Distance Learning Vision

The Distance Learning program at Frederick Community College will fulfill the college's mission by increasing access to intellectually vibrant, technology-based distance learning courses for a richly diverse population and workforce.

Basic Principles for the Distance Learning Mission

1. Instructional programs and courses offered at a distance both support and extend FCC's role as a premier educational institution in Maryland. They are consistent with the mission of the College.

2. Distance Education at FCC provides a consistent and coherent framework of instructional technology for students and faculty.

3. Distance Education at FCC strives to observe legal and regulatory requirements, e.g., requirements for service to those with disabilities, copyright law, and ownership provisions for intellectual property

4. Distance Education at FCC is curriculum-driven and adheres to pedagogical standards of quality for both instructional programs and courses.

5. Distance Education at FCC is guided by qualified professionals and focuses on learning outcomes for an increasingly diverse student population.

6. FCC is committed to providing students with electronic access to appropriate academic and student support services.

7. Distance Education at FCC provides an ongoing program of appropriate technical, design, production and teaching support for participating faculty members.

8. Faculty have a role in considering and deciding issues of faculty evaluation, workload, compensation, and ownership of intellectual property resulting from the design, development and/or teaching of an electronically offered course or program.

9. As a component of FCC's overall assessment activities, documented assessment of student achievement is conducted in each distance education course, by measuring student performance against the intended learning outcomes.

10. Distance Education at FCC is committed to a process of continual self-evaluation directed toward program improvement, targeting more effective uses of technology to improve pedagogy, advances in student achievement of intended outcomes, improved retention rates, and effective use of resources.

III. Distance Learning Action Plan

A. Overall Goals

1. Expand and enhance credit and non-credit distance learning offerings, including courses, degree and certificate programs, and workforce training.

2. Refine college policies for copyright and intellectual property. Since The TEACH Act, the bill updating the Copyright Act to provide for distance education in the

information age (bill S.487) is now expected to pass the House without difficulty, the college must examine the rules governing copyright and the property rights. The College's distance learning program must be built on a stable base of course material that are in compliance with current copyright laws and arrange for ownership in such a way that a course can be offered even if a specific faculty member is not available to teach it. The college must also be sensitive to the rights of its faculty and establish clear policies so that all developers are aware of copyright implications for their work.

3. Update and enforce standards of good practice for distance learning programs. The college must continue to balance the growth of enrollments and the quality of its distance learning courses and services. The College developed Standards of Best Practice in Distance Learning at the beginning of 2000. When the Distance Learning Management Group (DLMG), convenes in Fall 2002, it will review and update those standards and make recommendations regarding implementation.

B. Objectives

1. Streamline distance learning administration and procedures to enhance efficiency and effectiveness as.

2. Using an array of technologies, increase degree, certificate and workforce training pathways for students enrolled in credit and non-credit distance learning offerings.

3. Provide systematic training and support for faculty and staff involved in the development and delivery of distance learning courses.

4. Evaluate quality and effectiveness of distance learning courses and programs.

5. Consolidate a stable technical infrastructure to deliver distance learning courses and programs in conjunction with the college's technology plan.

B. Success Indicators

1. The number of asynchronously delivered distance learning credit courses offered will increase from 36 (Fall 2001) to 75 by the Fall 2005.

Fall 01	Fall 02	Fall 03	Fall 04	Fall 05
36	43	52	63	75

2. The number of degrees available at a distance will increase from 2 to 5 by FY 05.

3. The number of workforce related non-credit certificate programs available at a distance will increase to 4 by FY 05.

4. Student satisfaction on a Web-accessible survey administered each semester will consistently rank as "good" or "outstanding."

5. Unduplicated headcounts and enrollments will increase.

6. Distance learning will maintain a positive revenue flow.

IV.   Description of Distance Learning Program

Following is a detailed description of the Distance Learning program, which includes: a description of supported Distance Learning formats, the distance learning enrollment history, a profile of faculty who teach distance learning courses, a description of faculty training and course development, and information about the Distance Learning Management Group.

Distance learning formats supported by FCC

Asynchronous Formats

Telecourses
Beginning with 3 courses in 1976, the original charge of FCC's telecourse program was to serve students who are unable to take advantage of traditional classroom courses because of scheduling conflicts, lack of transportation, home responsibilities such as caring for small children or elderly parents, severe disabilities, incarceration, etc. Throughout the 90's the college's telecourse program was consistent in offering between 15 and 18 telecourses each semester. With the arrival of web-based courses enrollments in telecourses have not declined FY 02.

Online Courses
In the spring of 1998 the college offered it's first online course. By FY2000 the College had graduated from it's initial set of handcrafted online courses to the adoption of Blackboard as the platform with which approximately 15 faculty members began to deliver online courses or course components. The available online courses, however, did not add up to a degree. It was only with the course offering in the fall of 2001 that the College was able to subject the original random selection to a rationale of organized growth which brought the college close to providing an online degree option for its distance learning students.

Synchronous Formats

Interactive Courses
In 1998, the first fiber optic classroom of the Maryland Interactive Distance Learning Network (MIDLN) was installed in FCC's E-Building and Conference Center. The purpose of these classrooms is to link the college to

more than 100 sites throughout Maryland for the purpose of sharing statewide programs and instructional resources. In the Fall of 2002 FCC offers 2 MIDLN courses provided by Prince George's Community College.

Distance Learning enrollment history

	Fall 99	Spr 00	Fall 00	Spr 01	Fall 01	Spr 02	Fall 02
Online							
Courses Scheduled	8	8	10	14	15	18	25
Enrollments	116	113	121	181	259	286	
Ave / Section	14.5	14	12	13	17.3	15.8	
Telecourse							
Courses Scheduled	15	14	15	14	19	18	18
Enrollments	220	162	213	158	248	233	
Ave / Section	14.6	11.6	14.2	11.3	13	12.9	
Interactive MIDLN							
Courses				1		2	
Enrollments		17	10	9		29	
Ave / Section							
TOTALS	336	275	334	339	507	548	

Faculty teaching distance learning courses

For Fall 02, the Faculty Profile below indicates that 19 (57.6% of all distance faculty) fulltime faculty and 14 adjunct faculty (42.3% of all distance faculty) teach distance learning courses.

Fall 02

Format	Fulltime	Part-time
Online Courses – 25 courses/sections	12	9
Telecourses – 18 courses/sections	7	5
Totals	19	14

Faculty training and course development

Frederick Community College has made significant efforts in implementing a systematic faculty training program. The program provides the skills and the time for faculty to work on the development of online courses and to learn the appropriate technologies, in particular the Blackboard technology. With the focus on teaching and learning the program targets the following objectives:

- Develop online general education courses so the students can earn degrees and fulfill their educational goals.

- Using a "refresher" approach for qualified faculty member to revisit the instructional design of their courses making improvements on the basis of student evaluations.
- Target telecourses for new instructional design elements such as email and web-based technology to improve and monitor the quality of these courses.

Faculty Training supports three types of courses

1. Web-based Courses, fully online courses developed using Blackboard;

2. Hybrid Courses, mainly taught on campus with the assistance of web-based technology;

3. Telecourses, existing telecourses to which faculty will add instructional components using discussion and email.

The program trains full-time and part-time instructors who wish to adapt an existing course for online delivery. Courses are developed by individual faculty members in cooperation with the Director of Distance Learning and the respective department chair. Emphasis is placed on developing high quality course materials that meet or exceed the learning objectives established by the department.

Distance Learning Management Group (DLMG)

The Distance Learning Management Group (DLMG) is chaired by the Director of Distance Learning. Comprised of faculty and administrators from student services and the library, the DLMG provides guidance and oversight for the Distance Learning program including the following specific charges:
- Review and revise the current distance learning standards of good practice
- Develop and implement an on-going assessment plan for distance learning that includes
  - a summary of current statistics about the program, including enrollment data, retention rates, success rates, and degrees earned,
  - the refinement of an evaluation instrument for determining student and faculty satisfaction,
  - the standards of good practice for distance learning tied to the teaching and learning process for distance learning courses

V. Market Environmental Analysis and National Trends

Five significant trends are emerging in distance education:

1. Telecommunications technologies are eliminating local geographic boundaries that have been the focus of community colleges. While our primary mission will remain

to serve our local community, growth areas will include regional, national and international populations.

2. These new technologies have created links directly into homes and workplaces. The population of Frederick County was 194 871 in 2000 and there are 70 060 households. Using the national estimate of 40% saturation, approximately 28 000 households in this county have access to computers.

3. Nationally, the number of adult learners (25+) increased from 30% in 1970 to more than 50% in 1990. Of these, 85% work (most full time) and 70% seek degrees; these learners are not casual learners. Adult learners are seeking a continuous upgrade of job-related skills and looking for faster-paced, more convenient courses that can be used to secure or advance their positions in the workplace.

4. Businesses are looking for faster-paced, customized and more convenient training.

5. Based on emerging technologies, a shift toward adult learners, and direct connections to homes and businesses, distance learning clearly presents an economic opportunity for the college.

A. Statewide Initiatives

Frederick Community College has been an active partner in the following statewide distance learning initiatives:

MarylandOnline -- www.MarylandOnline.org

MarylandOnline, an inter-segmental consortium of sixteen Maryland community colleges and seven senior institutions, offers students the opportunity to achieve their educational goals by completing courses, certificates, and degree programs at a distance. Currently MarylandOnline represents more than 60 certificate programs, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and graduate degrees – all available at a distance. Membership in MarylandOnline is open to all Maryland higher education institutions, public and private, that are licensed by the Maryland Higher Education Commission and accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. MarylandOnline is organized as a (501)(c)(3) corporation.
At the core of MarylandOnline is the Maryland Online course-sharing initiative, composed of all Maryland Community Colleges. The mission of this initiative is to provide Maryland community college students with greater access to distance learning opportunities through a cost-effective, cooperative process for sharing distance learning courses that preserves institutional autonomy.

Faculty Online Technology Training Consortium (FOTTC) --
www.Mdfaconline.org

As of December 1, 1999, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) funded the Faculty Online Technology Training Consortium, a partnership of 20 Maryland institutions including Frederick Community College and representing the members of MarylandOnline and (formerly) MCCT. Targeted specifically to increase instructional technology training opportunities for faculty, the key components of the grant project include: Design and maintain the Maryland Faculty Online Web site; develop a Train-the-Trainer approach to training faculty; create online training modules at the intermediate, advanced and training levels; provide Cross-Institutional Technology Training Incentives to encourage collaboration among partner institutions to provide faculty training. Evaluate and disseminate project activities.

Project Synergy (FOTTC – PS) -- www.Mdfaconline.org

In July 2001, the Maryland Higher Education Commission funded a second grant to continue the work begun by FOTTC in providing faculty training to the MarylandOnline member institutions. Project Synergy will provide discipline specific training to each of the 23 partner institutions of MarylandOnline in six key discipline areas: mathematics, science, liberal arts, information technology, teacher education and allied health/health management.

B. Frederick Community College's Distance Learning Students

Studies performed from the spring of 2001 to the spring of 2002 (included) indicate that the college's distance learning student profile generally conforms to national statistics regarding distance learners:
- 55% of our distance learners are over the age of 24
- 31% of our distance learners are between the ages of 20-24
- 76% are female
- by the spring of 2002, 41% had completed a prior online course

Additionally, the aggregate figures show that 92.6% of the students are residents of Frederick County. Our typical distance learning student is a female adult learner, who is motivated by clear educational goals and, more likely than not, is seeking a degree..

C. Marketing Initiatives

- Showcase distance learning in schedule of classes and brochures.
- Establish distance learning as a priority for paid advertising.
- Re-design and continuously update the distance learning web pages.
- Produce cable spots to highlight distance learning courses and programs on FCC's local channel.
- Showcase the Distance Learning Center on campus

VI. Distance Learning Growth Plan

The college's distance learning program is committed to the following growth objectives:

A. **Access For Students:** Create a broader spectrum of distance learning courses as well as degree or certificate pathways for students enrolled in such courses.
The college has positioned itself to provide access for students via distance learning in the following ways

- FCC has an on-going training program for full-time and adjunct faculty experienced in providing distance learning courses, thus ensuring standards of good practice
- FCC provides local as well as online access to courses and instructional support such as the library, tutoring and testing;
- FCC operates a stable technology infrastructure for the reliable delivery of distance learning courses.

B. **Competitive Edge:** Position the college to compete in a technology-rich environment to deliver instruction directly to homes and businesses.
The college is positioned to be competitive in distance learning because of its:

- experienced faculty and exceptional institutional resources
- technology leadership that ensures a stable infrastructure
- centralized distance learning administration

C. **Leadership:** Seek out and participate in leadership opportunities in local and statewide distance education initiatives.
The college is positioned to provide leadership for distance learning because it:

- provides leadership for MarylandOnline
- serves as an agent for Project Synergy
- has well-established links to the College of the Air Distance Education Consortium (MDLA) and Maryland Public Television

D. **Distance Learning Work Plan:** For FY 03, the college will focus on the following specific activities related to distance learning:

- Continue to consolidate and refine distance learning office operations to improve services to students and faculty, including
    o Quicker response to student inquiries via voice mail and email
    o Continue to improve the Orientation at the beginning of each semester to make it more valuable for students
- Improve and expand faculty training for the three distance learning formats
- Improve processes for communicating with students, including

o   Re-design and continually update the distance learning Web page
o   Generate mailings to students directly after registration
- Improve Marketing Strategy by developing a special publications that include distance learning (telecourse, online, interactive video) to attract students who have scheduling constraints

E. Growth Plans for Telecourses, Online Courses and Interactive Video Courses

Telecourses

Currently
FCC offers between 17-19 courses each semester, all commercially available. The courses are broadcast over MPT and cablecast over FCC-TV23, the college's dedicated local cable channel.
Enrollments have been holding steady over the last four semesters.

Needs:
Offer lab science courses for General Studies
Explore development of TeleWeb courses (telecourses with Web components)

Growth Potential
In an environment of progressing online delivery, the growth potential for traditional telecourses is limited. Enrollment increase should remain consistent with college enrollment (if college enrollment is projected to grow by 3%, telecourses will be projected to grow by 3%)

- Increase enrollments by offering 1-2 new courses each year
- Cross-market courses and degree option to students enrolled in Weekend College and non-traditional formats.

Online Courses

Currently
FCC offers 25 online courses of its own and 3-5 online courses that originate at other community colleges in Maryland
Instructional needs supported by the Blackboard 5.5 Course Management System (CMS) hosted on Blackboard servers

Needs
- 24/7 technical help desk for students
- Reliable high speed Internet access to allow for streaming video
- Incorporation of more multimedia into courses where appropriate

- Improve online admissions, registration, advising and instructional support
- Identification of niche markets for online course delivery in business
- Identification of national and international markets for growth

Growth Potential
Current enrollment patterns in Maryland community colleges indicate explosive growth potential

- Explore development of TeleWeb courses (Online courses with telecourses components)
- Increase enrollments by offering 7-10 new courses each year

Interactive Courses

Currently
FCC operates one interactive video classroom. The technology is expensive to support (monthly tariffs and long distance charges)

Credit programs focus on statewide programs (Forensic Science) and upper level courses in Mathematics and Engineering.

Need
- Cost-effective model for scheduling and programming interactive classrooms; current model is inefficient, costly and results in few enrollments.
- Add compressed video capability to at least one interactive classroom to expand functionality.
- Improved faculty training in MIDLN technology and pedagogy.

Growth Potential
Limited growth potential. Efficient room utilization is important. Low-enrollment courses, Statewide and shared programs will continue to be the prime focus of the fiber classroom.
- Increase enrollments by offering 1-2 new courses each year
- Identify institutions other than colleges (museums etc.) that utilize interactive classroom technology

VII. Benefits and Risks To The College

Benefits To The College

- Fulfill the college's mission to serve the community's distinct population that requires flexible formats to complete their education goals.

- Increase enrollments, particularly in online courses.
- Maximize institutional resources since telecourse and online courses do not require classroom space, utilities, parking, etc.
- Expand sections offered simultaneously for daytime and evening population
- Expand technology offerings without adding computer lab space
- Share programs and resources with education partners throughout the state.
- Position the college to take advantage of opportunities in business and employee training that interactive video and online technologies make possible.
- Position the college to compete in national and international markets, extending outreach far beyond the potential of current and projected buildings.
- Prepare the college for future directions in instructional delivery and design.

Risks To The College

- Online course enrollment is capped at 20, reducing enrollments and revenues in some courses compared to their on-location counterpart sections.
- Failure to pursue the development of online courses and other emerging formats may result in the college being perceived as falling behind in technology
- Transforming traditionally disposable funds in the operating budget into fixed technology replacement and upgrade expenses which now have become constituent to the success of the College as a premier learning institution.

VIII. Financial Data

A. Basic Assumptions

Expenses
1. Salaries and budgets will increase by 5% annually.
2. During FY 04 an additional employee will be hired.
3. On-going funding will be provided for faculty training.
4. Stipends for course development and design will stay at the present level.

Revenues
1. Tuition will remain stable.
2. Enrollments will be stable in telecourses and interactive video courses.
3. Training and development will result in revenues from 7-10 new online courses each year.
4. Enrollments and average per section in online courses will increase to 16/20.

Appendix A
Telecourse Work Plan

<u>**FY 01**</u>

Growth Initiatives:
- Identify one or two additional commercially-available courses that might be offered and forward to faculty for review
- Revise telecourse questionnaires for distance learning students.

Production: Plan (FY 01) and videotape (FY 02) Introduction to Computers or a Math telecourse

Marketing:
- Improve Telecourse pages on distance learning Web page
- 20% of Telecourse Syllabi available on distance learning Web page

Technology:
- Research, purchase and implement new voice mail system
- Pilot delivery of telecourses on-demand by using the video server both on-campus and at the off-campus centers

Professional Development:
Schedule workshops for telecourse faculty (Back to Basics, standards of good practice, faculty Web pages, etc.)

<u>**FY 02**</u>

Growth Initiatives: Identify and develop lab science telecourse

Production:
- Offer CSI and/or Math telecourse
- Plan and videotape additional Math telecourse

Marketing:
- Implement marketing strategies in news media and over cable channels;
- 30 % of telecourse syllabi online

Technology: Develop one or two TeleWeb courses

Professional development activities:
Schedule work sessions to assist faculty to develop web component for telecourses.

Appendix B
Online Work Plan

<u>**FY 01**</u>

Growth Initiatives

Develop 18 online courses for Spring 2001; develop 15 courses for Spring 2002

Noncredit

Work with Continuing Education, Workforce and Institutional Development Division to identify online course/training opportunities.

Marketing

- Re-design Web page
- With Public Relations, plan Marketing strategies
- Joint marketing with noncredit

Technology

- Update CMS conferencing software as needed.
- Work with Records, IT to restructure college services such as rolling registration, online admissions and advisement, payment via Internet.

Professional Development

As noncredit offerings are identified, assist faculty in developing web-based courses.

Leadership

Participate in planning and implementation of statewide faculty training grants (Faculty Online Technology Training Consortium and Project Synergy)

<u>**FY 02**</u>

Growth Initiatives

- Develop 12 online courses for Spring 2003
- Develop 12 courses for Fall 2004

Marketing

Identify niche markets for national and international distribution of credit and noncredit courses.

Technology

- Update CMS conferencing software as needed.
- Ensure that dial-in access to the college server is adequate to accommodate increasing numbers of students.

Professional Development
        Continue Online Express

Leadership
        Participate in MarylandOnline and other consortial efforts

Appendix C
Interactive Video Work Plan

FY 01

Growth Initiatives

- With Anne Arundel, Howard, and Carroll Community Colleges, identify new partners for fiber-based interactive video, including offering the "Fun Channel" (selected courses that are not General Education but are unusual and interesting such as Films in Science Fiction, Conflict Resolution, and Magic, Witchcraft and Religion)
- Do cost/benefit analysis to determine if the college can continue to support the MIDLN technology
- With addition of compressed video capability, identify new partners for delivery of business and industry training locally, nationally and internationally.

Marketing

Plan joint Marketing Strategy for the "Fun Channel" schedule for Spring 02 with community college partners (Anne Arundel, Howard, and Carroll)

Technology

Add compressed video function to one MIDLN room

Professional Development

Continue to participate in statewide training opportunities

Leadership

Continue participation in MIDLN subcommittee of MDLA

FY 02

Growth initiatives

Offer Forensic Science as statewide program

Marketing

Implement joint marketing strategy for interactive video

Technology

Add compressed video function second MIDLN room

Professional Development

Continue to participate in statewide training opportunities

Leadership

Continue leadership role in interactive video issues