

Governance Models for Online Consortia

Prepared for Foothill-De Anza
Community College District

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In the following report, Hanover Research analyzes governance models for online consortia for Foothill-De Anza Community College District.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Foothill-De Anza Community College District (FHDA) plans to apply for a grant to expand the California Virtual Campus (CVC) by delivering a comprehensive system of online education with technical, curricular, and support components.¹ Specific questions raised by FHDA include:

- Which states have state-wide distance learning (or online instruction) systems or consortia?
- How long have such networks been in place, how are they funded, and what is their legal authority?
- How are these networks governed and administered?
- How are transfers, registration, accreditation, and finances handled between consortium institutions?

FHDA is particularly interested in discerning how other states provide online courses through a consortium, leverage these transfer pathways, and develop plans to support courses focused on basic skills (math and English).

KEY FINDINGS

Hanover was able to discern some general guidelines that should apply to FHDA's needs:

- Of higher education systems in the United States, **13 states have significantly developed consortia, 21 states (including California) have very limited/basic online portals, and 16 states do not appear to have significant state-wide distance learning websites.** The majority of state-wide consortia were founded between 1994 and 2001.
- The **13 highly-developed consortia offer similar services**, including: technical support, search engines for all state-wide online courses, liaisons between consortium members, helpdesk services, Blackboard coordination, a single state-wide server for course materials, professional development for faculty (pertaining to online teaching), videoconference hosting, cloud services, and other infrastructure.
- **Most consortia appear to be funded primarily by state-wide higher education boards**, and are usually staffed either on a part-time basis by consortium member faculty or with a few full-time employees who focus only on the consortium. Some consortia charge an annual member fee to defray costs (\$1,000 annually for Illinois

¹ CVC, "Home." <http://www.cvc.edu/>

members, for example), while others seek private foundation grants in addition to public funding.

- **Some state consortia range beyond higher education and include technical support for adult education, K-12, and workforce development** and thus serve as an important node for a variety of state-wide services. Such is the case in Connecticut and Maryland.
- **Legal authority can usually be traced back to a state-wide advisory board of colleges and universities**, when noted by the consortia at all,. Administrative staff size of each consortium ranges from small to non-existent; staff from member colleges will either work part-time on consortium activities (that is, there are no independent staff for the consortium apart from technical support) or consortia will employ a handful of independent staff. On the opposing side, member colleges will often have a single liaison specifically tasked with consortium coordination.
- In all cases except for Wisconsin (which offers an online-only AA in arts and sciences), **consortia do not grant degrees and are not accredited**; rather, accreditation is always applicable only to the individual colleges within the consortium, rather than the consortium itself. In terms of supporting courses focused on basic skills or general education, only Wisconsin has a consortium-based, online-only offering for core curriculum courses.
- For students, taking consortium courses online does not affect the fact that **tuition, credits, degrees, and other administrative activities are typically arrogated to the “home campus,”** and the consortium plays a minimal role in these processes. Consortium websites will usually emphasize that the student should refer to the “home campus” registrar and financial aid office for all such matters.
- **Internal accounting practices (within consortia) are unfortunately not publicly available.**
- **Credit transfer policies are not always clearly laid out.** However; in most cases the majority of online learning credits will transfer to any campus within the consortium; consortia websites will typically provide a specialized search engine or similar tool to calculate which credits will transfer.
- **A single college within the consortium occasionally hosts consortium services** (for example, Austin Community College in Texas).
- **Multi-state consortia tend to have more complex administrative and financial arrangements** in comparison to state consortia. Such is the case with Western Governors University.

SECTION I: MULTI-STATE CONSORTIA

This brief section examines a handful of prominent multi-state consortia, including Western Governors University. While state-wide consortia are more common, there are some interesting examples of multi-state efforts that illustrate best practices which could be applied at the state level. (This section does not include what could be described as “professional development consortia,” such as the Sloan Consortium, American Distance Education Consortium, and Online Consortium of Independent Colleges & Universities, which are not directly involved with students in higher education.²)

WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY

Western Governors University (WGU) was founded in 1995 at a bipartisan meeting of the Western Governors Association. The chair of the association—Utah governor Mike Leavitt—argued that distance learning technologies had the power to tackle one of the western states’ most pressing problems: rapid population growth confronted by limited public funds for educational services.³ The 19 governors in attendance agreed that this new university would make good use of distance learning technologies and would be collaborative among the western member states. WGU is currently supported by over 20 major corporations and foundations that help to create a career pipeline for graduates.⁴

FACULTY AND STUDENTS

As of July 2012, WGU employs over 1,100 full-time faculty, plus over 200 part-time faculty, serving in one of several faculty roles. About 85 percent of student mentors and over 98 percent of course mentors have earned a graduate degree. WGU’s headquarters are located in Salt Lake City, Utah, and the university has offices in Phoenix, Arizona; Indianapolis, Indiana; Seattle, Washington; and Austin, Texas. Many of WGU’s faculty and staff, however, work from their homes.⁵ For each student, the primary faculty support is a personally assigned Student Mentor. The role of the Student Mentor is to provide advice, coaching, and support from the moment an individual becomes a student to the time he or she graduates. Course Mentors are subject matter experts who support students as they engage specific sections of the WGU curriculum. Their experience and training is specific to the courses they support.⁶

² See Caitlin Moriarty, “Consortia to the Rescue,” *University Business* (January 2013).
<http://www.universitybusiness.com/article/consortia-rescue>

³ WGU, “The WGU Story.” http://www.wgu.edu/about_WGU/WGU_story

⁴ WGU, “About WGU.” http://www.wgu.edu/about_wgu/overview

⁵ WGU, “WGU Faculty.” http://www.wgu.edu/about_WGU/wgu_faculty

⁶ WGU, “About WGU.” http://www.wgu.edu/about_wgu/overview

ACCREDITATION

Western Governors University is regionally accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, one of the major accrediting commissions recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The WGU Teachers College is the first exclusively online university to receive accreditation for its degree programs that lead to teacher licensure from the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which is the premier specialized accrediting body for teacher preparation and is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The bachelor's and master's nursing degree programs at WGU are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, while WGU's Health Informatics program is now accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM). WGU's Information Security and Assurance program has been certified by the National Security Agency's Information Assurance Courseware Evaluation (IACE) Program.⁷

ADMINISTRATION

WGU is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of educators, industry leaders, and state governors. In addition, WGU continues to draw support (although no state funding) from the governors of the member states that were instrumental in the founding of WGU.⁸ The National Advisory Board is comprised of representatives from prestigious corporations and foundations that provide ongoing support and advice to the university. Academic programs are developed and guided by WGU administrators working through several councils, which are comprised of academicians and industry experts in the various fields of knowledge.⁹ In addition to being founded by governors, several states have created state established and affiliated schools. Though state funding in some instances was used for the creation, each school is self-supporting through tuition and donations and overseen by the WGU board along with a local state chancellor and advisory board. WGU state schools include [Indiana](#), [Missouri](#), [Tennessee](#), [Texas](#), and [Washington](#), which are not associated with state consortia listed below.

GREAT PLAINS INTERACTIVE DISTANCE EDUCATION ALLIANCE

The Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (IDEA) began as a collegial group of human sciences academic administrators who shared a common interest in educating rural professionals through the use of distance technologies and shared courses. Since the first gathering of its founders in 1994, the Great Plains IDEA has evolved into a post-baccalaureate distance education alliance that sponsors inter-institutional academic programs and develops policy and practice models for inter-institutional distance education programs.¹⁰ Members include many large state universities in the Midwest, such as the

⁷ WGU, "Accreditation." http://www.wgu.edu/about_WGU/accreditation

⁸ WGU, "University Governance." http://www.wgu.edu/about_WGU/governance_industry

⁹ See, for example, WGU, "Academic Leadership." http://www.wgu.edu/wgu/academic_leadership

¹⁰ Great Plains IDEA, "About." <http://www.gpidea.org/about/alliance/>

University of Arkansas, Iowa State University, Oklahoma University, and South Dakota State University.¹¹

FACULTY AND STUDENTS

Member institutions participate in programs that fit their interests and expertise, and each member institution awards academic credit and degrees for programs in which they participate. Curricula are developed by inter-institutional faculty teams, and so the same core curriculum is offered at each member institution in the program with that institution's course title and number. All courses and curricula receive full institutional review and meet the academic standards of the participating institutions; courses are taught by faculty from each of the partner institutions on a schedule determined by the faculty team.¹²

Great Plains IDEA students apply and are admitted to a single member university, which becomes their home institution. As in many state consortia, students enroll and pay tuition at their home institution, but courses are taught by faculty from each of the partner institutions. Each university has a campus coordinator who works with students as they enroll through Great Plains IDEA to answer general questions about admission, programs, enrollment, scheduling and graduation.¹³

Students pay the Great Plains IDEA "Common Price" per credit hour regardless of the home or teaching institution. The student's transcript is developed and diploma awarded at the home institution, so there is no credit transfer between institutions. Revenue is distributed among the home institution, teaching institution and central alliance management to ensure sustainable programs and a sustainable alliance.¹⁴ If a student enrolls in a course at their home institution, but outside of Great Plains IDEA, regular university tuition and fees may apply.¹⁵

ACCREDITATION

Members of the Great Plains IDEA are universities accredited by a regional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Member universities recruit, admit and graduate students, teach in an academic program and contribute to the leadership and maintenance of the alliance. Membership in the alliance is a selective process that engages institutional leadership at all levels.¹⁶

¹¹ Great Plains IDEA, "Member Universities." <http://www.hsidea.org/about/members/>

¹² Great Plains IDEA, "Getting Started." <http://www.gpidea.org/students/getting-started/>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Great Plains IDEA, "Frequently Asked Questions." <http://www.gpidea.org/support/faq/#q2>

¹⁶ Ibid.

SEMESTER ONLINE

Founded in 2012, Semester Online is a consortium composed of 10 highly selective colleges—Brandeis University, Duke University, Emory University, Northwestern University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Notre Dame, University of Rochester, Vanderbilt University, Wake Forest University, and Washington University in St. Louis. Designed to match the quality of an on-campus experience, Semester Online features intimate, live class sessions, social networking tools, and access to world-class faculty.¹⁷ The semester-long online courses use software from 2U, an education-technology company formerly called 2tor.¹⁸ Notably, the consortium does not have an independent administration; rather, its part-time board consists of staff from member schools.¹⁹

Peter Lange, the provost of Duke University, points out that one draw for the colleges is the expansion in their course catalogs. “No university can deliver the full range of courses that both might be interesting and useful and enlightening to our students. Imagine if you don’t have a person who works on the Sahel region in Africa, but another school does.”²⁰ According to the website, consortium and affiliate schools will accept most Semester Online courses for credit. Also, students studying at colleges that are not Semester Online consortium or affiliate partner schools are eligible to apply, but it is recommended that such students consult their academic advisor or registrar’s office to learn about transfer policies.²¹ Credit hours are based on the number of contact hours involved in each course (80 minutes of live class and approximately 80 minutes of self-paced coursework).²² Students who do not attend a school in the consortium are still allowed to take classes, and are billed directly by Semester Online.²³

¹⁷ Semester Online, “Consortium Partner Schools.” <http://semesteronline.org/schools/>

¹⁸ “10 Highly Selective Colleges Form Consortium to Offer Online Courses.” *Chronicle of Higher Education Staff*, November 15, 2012. <http://chronicle.com/blogs/wiredcampus/10-colleges-will-offer-online-courses-for-participants-in-study-abroad-programs/41070>

¹⁹ Semester Online, “Leadership.” <http://semesteronline.org/about/leadership/>

²⁰ Hannah Seligson, “University Consortium to Offer Small Online Courses for Credit.” *The New York Times* (November 15, 2012). http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/16/education/duke-northwestern-to-offer-semester-online-classes.html?_r=0

²¹ Semester Online, “How to Apply.” <http://semesteronline.org/admissions/how-to-apply/>

²² Semester Online, “Transfer Credit.” <http://semesteronline.org/admissions/transfer-credit/>

²³ Semester Online, “Tuition & Financial Aid.” <http://semesteronline.org/admissions/tuition-financial-aid/>

SECTION II: STATE CONSORTIA

In this section, we examine state consortia/networks of higher education for the 13 U.S. states that have developed such systems. To ensure accuracy, most of the language in these profiles is taken directly from the state websites in question. We did not include “partial” state-wide consortia such as Five Colleges in Massachusetts or the Claremont Colleges in California, and also do not include consortia which exist solely for the purpose of sharing (for example) library materials or technical expertise.²⁴

In addition, we left out states with minimal state-wide online learning websites—[Washington](#), [Alaska](#), [Connecticut](#), [Arkansas](#), [Georgia](#), [Idaho](#), [Michigan](#), [Minnesota](#), [New Hampshire](#), [Maine](#), [Massachusetts](#), [South Carolina](#), [Montana](#), [South Dakota](#), [Virginia](#), [North Dakota](#), [West Virginia](#), [Wyoming](#), [Utah](#), and [New Jersey](#). Each of the state websites in question consist of a simple portal for online course offerings within the state and typically do not list separate staff or shared resources and thus fall outside the definition of a true higher education network or consortium. Notably, California’s CVC also falls into this “minimal portal” category, which indicates the void that FHDA is attempting to fill.

COLORADO (CCCONLINE)

HISTORY AND
LEGAL AUTHORITY

Not provided.

CONSORTIUM ROLE

CCCONline, a consortium comprised of the thirteen Community Colleges in the Colorado Community College System, offers online courses (not degrees or certificates). Degrees and certificates vary from college to college within the CCC system, and applying in person at a “home campus” is necessary.²⁵ CCCOnline does not provide all of the services that students receive at their “home campus,” but does assist with technical support, textbooks, and other necessary online materials.²⁶ Only certain degrees are available through the CCCOnline system (AA and AS degrees), and two session lengths are offered (10-week and 15-week).

ADMINISTRATION
AND FUNDING

CCCONline does not accept tuition or fees, and has no access to account information; all data is routed through the business office of the student’s home campus. Tuition rates are set by the Colorado General Assembly at the recommendation of the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education. The consortium has dedicated separate staff,

²⁴ For a helpful overview, see “Consortia in Higher Education.” *Education Encyclopedia*.

<http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1881/Consortia-in-Higher-Education.html>

²⁵ CCCOnline, “Register.” <http://www.cconline.org/register/>

²⁶ CCCOnline, “About Us.” http://www.cconline.org/About_Us/Home_Colleges/

including an Associate Dean, Academic Dean, and Quality Assurance Coordinator.²⁷

TRANSFER POLICIES	The courses available through CCCOnline are transferable to any of the thirteen member home colleges in the Colorado Community College System and any public four-year state college. Students may transfer up to 25 percent of current credits between home colleges; it is advised that students research all home colleges to find the college offering the degree or program they are seeking prior to enrolling. Transfers are only allowed if both schools are within a defined state curriculum (the “gtPathways system”) and if the home college has an articulation agreement. CCCOnline as a virtual campus supports the CCCS Home Colleges by presenting 25 Guaranteed Transfer credit courses. Most or all classes at CCCOnline are accredited and transferable to any other Colorado State college. ²⁸
ACCREDITATION POLICIES	CCCOonline is not accredited as such, but the partner colleges are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

CONNECTICUT (CTDLC)

HISTORY AND LEGAL AUTHORITY	Founded in 1998, the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC) provides services and support for higher education in the state. CTDLC, as is the case in some other states, provides a very wide-ranging network of services not only for higher education, but also for adult education, K-12, and workforce development.
CONSORTIUM ROLE	CTDLC is not a consortium in the same sense as other state consortia in the U.S.; it provides tools for member colleges but does not directly serve college students. CTDLC is technically a division of Charter Oak State College, and a member of the Connecticut Board of Regents of Higher Education rather than a true state-wide organization.
ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING	CTDLC is a membership organization. The Executive Council serves as an advisory board and the Membership Council meets regularly to discuss innovations in eLearning technologies and best practices for teaching and learning online. While the CTDLC began as an organization primarily serving higher education in Connecticut, from its earliest days it has provided services to institutions outside of Connecticut and to a wide

²⁷ CCCOnline, “Policies & Procedures.” http://at.cconline.org/faculty/wiki/Policies_&_Procedures_-_Who_to_Contact

²⁸ CCCOnline, “Future Students.” http://www.cconline.org/Future_Students/Basics_You_Need_to_Know/#What_is_CCCOnline

variety of schools, colleges, universities, state agencies, and non-profit organizations. CTDLC also has a hybrid funding model.²⁹ It is partially supported by state government funding, but the majority of its revenue comes from for-profit services which include instructional design, grants management, technical support, and strategic consulting.³⁰

TRANSFER POLICIES Not applicable.

ACCREDITATION
POLICIES Not applicable.

FLORIDA (FLVC)

HISTORY AND
LEGAL AUTHORITY The Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC), incorporated on July 1, 2012, is a combination of four previously existing online-learning organizations. The Chancellors of the State University System and the Florida College System share joint oversight of the Florida Virtual Campus. A Board of Directors composed of college and university Vice Presidents appointed by the Chancellors, as well as officers from FLVC's advisory groups, assists the Chancellors in their governance role. The FLVC is also associated with the Florida Center for Advising and Academic Support (FCAAS, aka "FACTS.org"), the Florida Center for Library Automation (FCLA), and the College Center for Library Automation (CCLA). Section 1006.73 of Florida Statutes established FLVC to provide access to online student and library support services, and to serve as a statewide resource and clearinghouse for technology-based public postsecondary education distance learning courses and degree programs.³¹

CONSORTIUM ROLE The consortium's tasks include:

- Support for Florida's ever-growing population of distance learners and institutions offering online courses and degrees;
- Online academic advising services to help students identify the requirements of their chosen degree;
- A variety of tools used by staff at college and university libraries to provide services to their students and faculties;
- Online access to the library holdings of all Florida public colleges and universities, including electronic resources such as full-text

²⁹ CTDLC, "History." <http://www.ctdlc.org/About/History.cfm?nav=7>

³⁰ CTDLC, "About." <http://www.ctdlc.org/About/>

³¹ FLVC, "Governance." http://www.flvc.org/flvc/portal/Home_Page/About%20FLVC/Governance/

journals, databases, and eBooks; and

- Support and training for college and university students and staff using the services of FLVC.³²

ADMINISTRATION
AND FUNDING

The FLVC Board of Directors assists the Chancellors in their governance role. It is composed of college and university Vice Presidents appointed by the Chancellors, as well as officers from FLVC’s advisory groups. While the Florida Virtual Campus is governed by the Chancellors of the State University System and the Florida College System, its daily operations are overseen by the Executive Director in collaboration with the organization’s Leadership Team (including an Executive Director and three subordinate directors).³³

TRANSFER POLICIES

The FLVC site does not list any transfer policies specific to online learning, but rather points out that Florida colleges and universities have various articulation agreements in place that allow students to transition easily from one degree program to another. There are articulation agreements for Industry Certifications, Career Technical Certificates, Associate of Science, and Associate of Arts degrees.³⁴

ACCREDITATION
POLICIES

Consortium members are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or SACS; there is not a separate accreditation for the consortium.³⁵

ILLINOIS (ILCCO)

HISTORY AND
LEGAL AUTHORITY

In 1998, the Illinois Community College Presidents Council (Presidents Council) identified the need for a coordinated system-wide approach to community college online degree and certificate delivery. This led to the development of a fellowship at the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) for the development of a virtual community college for Illinois. ILCCO established a cooperative agreement between the 48 community colleges in Illinois. The agreement allowed the colleges to share online courses and programs with each other, expanding their offerings to serve their students, who would have access to courses available throughout the state but work through their “home campus” for student services (enrollment, payment, transcripts, etc.).

³² Ibid.

³³ FLVC, “Board Members.”

http://www.flvc.org/flvc/portal/Home_Page/About%20FLVC/aboutFLVC.boardOfDirectors/Board_Members/

³⁴ FLVC, “About Transferring.”

http://www.flvc.org/flvc/portal/Home_Page/Student%20Services/College_Transfer_Center/About_Transferring!/

³⁵ FLVC, “Accreditation.” <http://www.flvc.org/flvc/wcm/connect/Web+Content/flvc/degrees/collegeAccreditation>

ILCCO received grant funding to support its development. In 2001, ILCCO received a \$2.3 million Learning Anytime Anywhere Partnerships (LAAP) grant. It was also awarded an \$85,000 Illinois Century Network (ICN) Content Development grant. In 2002, ILCCO received a \$1.1 million Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant. The state of Illinois also provided grant funding directly to colleges through an ILCCO Student Support Center grant. In 2002, college districts were awarded \$13,808, and in 2003, college districts were awarded \$12,025, to provide support staff and marketing efforts.³⁶

CONSORTIUM ROLE	While ILCCO is not a separate institution that offers courses, it works with member college staff. ILCCO serves primarily as a basic portal, directing students to counselors and advisors at their “home campus.” ³⁷ Like some other state consortia, ILCCO shares its mission with K-12 and other educational programs and offers professional development courses and other services.
ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING	In FY2006, ILCCO moved to a paid membership model (\$1,000 per member) to support its costs. With the move to the membership model, ILCCO began to focus on three areas of service: leadership, professional development, and course and program sharing. ILCCO does not have independent staff.
TRANSFER POLICIES	Not provided.
ACCREDITATION POLICIES	Not provided; presumably each consortium member is accredited separately.

Iowa (ICCOC)

HISTORY AND LEGAL AUTHORITY	The ICCOC was founded in December 1999 when representatives from each partner college participated in a comprehensive planning process to design and implement the consortium’s technical infrastructure as well as establish objectives, policies, and procedures. The initial objectives were to establish resources and applications, train online instructors, develop online courses, coordinate student services support, and implement an informational website. The ICCOC was able to obtain these objectives through the commitment of all consortium partners to provide quality online educational opportunities to students. ³⁸
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The ICCOC Oversight Committee is comprised of two representatives

³⁶ ILCCO, “About.” <http://www.ilcco.net/ILCCO/?p=about>
³⁷ ILCCO, “Students.” <http://www.ilcco.net/ILCCO/?p=students>
³⁸ ICCOC, “About the ICCOC.” <http://www.iowacconline.org/6.html>

from each consortium college. Typically, these members are the Chief Academic Officer and the Distance Learning Dean/Director of each college. The Oversight Committee addresses all issues relating to the effective and efficient operation of the consortium. Each ICCOC partner college appoints at least one individual to serve on the Oversight Committee. A variety of positions can and do serve on this committee. Should a vote be required on any issue, each partner college has one vote regardless of the college representatives on the committee. The Oversight Committee annually approves the ICCOC budget and staff positions. Various special interest sub-groups of the Oversight Committee focus on the many supportive services required for effective operation of the ICCOC. Those groups may include faculty work groups, library services, student services, and administration.³⁹

CONSORTIUM ROLE Iowa's consortium is composed of seven partner colleges; online students must select one of these institutions as a home college. The consortium's duties are listed as follows:

- Incorporate institutional missions of all consortium partners;
- Combine existing resources, which include faculty, services, staff, and information technology at all, member colleges;
- Ensure academic rigor and quality in all courses and the overall program;
- Provide staffing to accommodate the needs of students, instructors, staff, and the ICCOC in general;
- Provide standards and accountability for the development and delivery of online courses, as well as student assessment;
- Provide processes and mechanisms for evaluating all aspects of the program (technology, student services, instructors); and
- Administer informational website that delivers student services to online students, serves as faculty training resource, and provides current and accurate information to all users. Work on automated processes to ensure efficiencies and accuracy.⁴⁰

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING The ICCOC staff is comprised of six full-time funded positions and four partially-funded positions. In addition to the ICCOC staff, many of the ICCOC college Distance Learning Directors, Deans, and eCollege representatives participate in the monthly staff meetings.⁴¹

TRANSFER POLICIES Each individual college in the consortium has established its own

³⁹ ICCOC, "Oversight." <http://www.iowacconline.org/17.html>

⁴⁰ ICCOC, "Applying for Admission." <http://www.iowacconline.org/105.html>

⁴¹ ICCOC, "Staff Members." <http://www.iowacconline.org/18.html>

articulation agreement with the following institutions that allows its graduates to transition into a four-year degree program. (Presumably, most or all ICCOC credits are transferrable within two-year schools in the consortium.)

ACCREDITATION POLICIES None provided; the consortium does not have separate accreditation.

INDIANA (ICN)

HISTORY AND LEGAL AUTHORITY ICN is a cooperative service of eight Indiana colleges and universities and their educational partners operated by the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunication System (IHETS) and governed by the Indiana Partnership for Statewide Education (IPSE). IHETS was established by the Indiana General Assembly in 1967, and IPSE created the Indiana College Network in 1994, making it the first such “virtual university consortium” in the country.⁴²

CONSORTIUM ROLE ICN serves primarily as a search portal, helping people locate the educational programs of interest to them and helping member institutions find students. ICN is not a degree-granting institution, and the degree is granted by the “home campus.” Through ICN, institutions arrange for their students to take classes from other ICN members as seamlessly as possible while preserving financial aid eligibility.⁴³

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING ICN has two types of participating institutions: Originating and Home. An Originating Institution is a college or university, high school, or other educational provider that offers distance education classes and lists them in the ICN Course Catalog. A Home Institution is a college or university that has agreed to follow certain guidelines to allow students to take courses from other schools. The Home Institution processes enrollment, maintains records, grants credit, issues grades, and grants a degree. Some institutions function as both Originating and Home Institutions, while others only fulfill one role.

TRANSFER POLICIES Students are advised to fill out the ICN Interinstitutional Course Form to ensure that a course from another institution will transfer to the Home Institution and apply towards specific degree requirements.⁴⁴

ACCREDITATION POLICIES ICN member institutions are accredited by regional and specialized accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.⁴⁵

⁴² ICN, “About ICN.” <http://www.icn.org/index.php/about-icn-welcome>

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ ICN, “FAQ.” <http://www.icn.org/index.php/faq>

⁴⁵ Ibid.

KANSAS (EDUKAN)

HISTORY AND LEGAL AUTHORITY	Beginning in the spring of 1998, six presidents of western Kansas community colleges met to evaluate an online means of offering courses to their student populations. From these early meetings, eduKan was formed. EduKan is not a separate institution, but instead a cooperative effort between member colleges to offer courses via the internet beginning Fall 1999. ⁴⁶
CONSORTIUM ROLE	EduKan is a consortium of six western Kansas community colleges that are fully accredited to offer courses online. The “home campus” is the college of enrollment. Students do not gain access to eduKan courses until the registration process has been completed at the home campus. ⁴⁷
ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING	Each college has an Academic Advisor who helps with choosing a curriculum and creating a program. ⁴⁸
TRANSFER POLICIES	EduKan courses generally include classes that have good transferability to other public Kansas Community Colleges and baccalaureate-oriented state and regionally accredited Regents Universities. Students must confirm with “home campus” academic advisor that the courses will meet the specific degree and major requirements of the new college. ⁴⁹
ACCREDITATION POLICIES	All colleges are regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. ⁵⁰

KENTUCKY (KYVC)

HISTORY AND LEGAL AUTHORITY	The Kentucky Virtual Campus (KYVC) is a program of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, which coordinates change and improvement in Kentucky’s postsecondary education system as directed by the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997. ⁵¹ Like some of the other consortia profiled in this report, KYVC provides various services and ranges across various types of education, and is not simply a higher education consortium.
CONSORTIUM ROLE	The mission of the KYVC is to serve as a statewide advocate for access to learning through technology, a convener of partners that use resources

⁴⁶ EduKan, “About.” <http://edukan.org/about/>

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ EduKan, “Student Services.” <http://edukan.org/admissions/student-services/>

⁴⁹ EduKan, “Academic Information.” <http://test.edukan.org/edukan/academicinfo.php>

⁵⁰ EduKan, “About.” <http://edukan.org/about/>

⁵¹ KYVC, “About KYVC.” <http://www.kyvu.org/aboutkyvc.shtm>

effectively, and a catalyst for innovation and excellence in eLearning. KYVC strives to a technology-based clearinghouse for quality online college credit, professional development, and supplemental studies. All of the online courses listed on the KYVC are instructor-led. Before classes begin, students are given access to the school's course management system, which is hosted either by the school's website or by the KYVC.⁵²

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING The Distance Learning Advisory Committee (DLAC) is responsible for creating committees and work groups which are charged with the responsibility for planning and recommending policies and procedures for KYVC. The Committee also addresses the coordination of policies, programs, support services, and infrastructure in support of distance education across all Kentucky postsecondary education institutions.

TRANSFER POLICIES All KYVC institutions granting bachelor's degrees guarantee that courses within the specified Associate's degree will transfer; however, the transfer contact or advisor at the transfer school needs to evaluate credits to be sure they apply most effectively to the degree in question. Different degree programs at different schools have specific course requirements that students must take to complete the degree. That means that even though a course may be accepted as transfer credit, it may not be accepted or counted as credit toward a bachelor's degree.⁵³

ACCREDITATION POLICIES The accreditation of KYVC partner providers by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) is implemented through SACS and not KYVC. Partner providers designate a contact liaison to coordinate communication between SACS and the partner regarding any issues with KYVC programs and courses.⁵⁴

MARYLAND (MOL)

HISTORY AND LEGAL AUTHORITY MarylandOnline (MOL) is a consortium of Maryland colleges and universities that offer certificate and degree programs in a principally online format, launched in fall 1999 with 12 charter member institutions.⁵⁵

CONSORTIUM ROLE MarylandOnline does not grant degrees or have its own college courses. Rather, each member institution can adopt online courses from another member when a course is not available at its own institution.⁵⁶

⁵² KYVC, "How Online Learning Works." <http://www.kyvu.org/howonlinelearningworks.shtm>

⁵³ KYVC, "How Transfer Works." <http://www.kyvc.org/howtransferworks.shtm>

⁵⁴ KYVC, "About KYVC." <http://www.kyvu.org/aboutkyvc.shtm>

⁵⁵ MarylandOnline, "About." <http://www.marylandonline.org/about/organization-description>

⁵⁶ MarylandOnline, "Our Students." <http://www.marylandonline.org/about/our-students>

MarylandOnline serves member institutions as well as distance learning students and professionals worldwide by providing leading-edge programs and services that: facilitate students' access to high-quality distance education courses, certificates, and degree programs; provide professional development opportunities and resources for faculty and others concerned with enhancing and assuring quality in distance education offerings; and promote research and advance principles and best practice in e-learning.⁵⁷

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING	MarylandOnline does not have separate administration. ⁵⁸
TRANSFER POLICIES	The consortium provides an articulation system search engine to determine which credits transfer within the consortium. ⁵⁹
ACCREDITATION POLICIES	MOL 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.

MISSISSIPPI (MSVCC)

HISTORY AND LEGAL AUTHORITY	The beginnings of the Mississippi Virtual Community College (MSVCC) can be traced back to the mid-1990s, when advanced internet and video conferencing technologies began to emerge within the public two-year institutions of the state. After extensive research and planning between 1997 and 1999, the MSVCC became a reality in January 2000 with initial course offerings and a duplicated enrollment of 1,382. Administrative staff are under the direction of the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges. ⁶⁰
CONSORTIUM ROLE	The VCC brings together various resources of 15 state community and junior colleges. Mississippi only requires the student to visit a "home campus" for registration and then once for a proctored exam (per semester). Grades are transcribed by the "home campus," not the consortium. ⁶¹ The consortium website allows the colleges to "leverage

⁵⁷ MarylandOnline, "Vision and Mission." <http://www.marylandonline.org/about/vision-and-mission>

⁵⁸ MarylandOnline, "Board Members." <http://www.marylandonline.org/about/board-members>

⁵⁹ ARTSYS, "Select Sending/Receiving Institution."

<http://www.caff.usmh.usmd.edu/artweb/chgri.cgi?9283441382559892>

⁶⁰ MSVCC, "Policies & Procedures." October 2011.

http://msvcc.squarespace.com/storage/MSVCC%20Policies%20and%20Procedures%20Manual%20October%202011_Revised_080812%202.pdf

⁶¹ MSVCC, "What is MSVCC?" <http://msvcc.squarespace.com/faqs/general-questions-about-mississippi-virt/what-is-msvcc.html>

their distance learning resources—including faculty, courses, support services, and technology.” Its website runs “in the cloud” and saves approximately \$1.5 million per year through centralization. After registering at a home campus, the “provider” college (any in the system) only provides course instruction, while the host college supports the student with a full slate of student services, including advisement and counseling, financial aid, and learning resources. The host college awards credit for the course.⁶² MSVCC ensures common platforms for online classes. There is an overall helpdesk for the state, as well.⁶³

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING Each member provides an Assistant Executive Director for eLearning and Instructional Technology and a Director of Training and Professional Development. Each college also provides an eLearning Coordinator.⁶⁴ State funding is awarded for courses that conform to all operational policies, procedures, and positions as approved by the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) in consultation with the Mississippi Association of Community/Junior Colleges (MACJC) and as interpreted by the MCCB.

TRANSFER POLICIES Not specified.

ACCREDITATION POLICIES All colleges are regionally accredited; MSVCC does not have separate accreditation.

NEW YORK (SLN)

HISTORY AND LEGAL AUTHORITY None provided.

CONSORTIUM ROLE The SUNY Learning Network (SLN) is a partnership in learning with SUNY SLN Campuses. The SLN’s online Catalog of courses is compiled from course and degree information provided by SUNY campuses. All online courses, degree and certificate programs are offered by SUNY campuses.⁶⁵ SLN provides:

- ANGEL Learning Management Software (LMS) to support the full range of online education;
- Professional development for all participating faculty regardless of LMS;
- Community of users committed to access to high-quality,

⁶² MSVCC, “About.” <http://msvcc.squarespace.com/about/>

⁶³ MSE-Campus, “Help Desk.” <http://www.mse-campus.org/msecamp/services/index.shtml>

⁶⁴ MSVCC, “Policies & Procedures,” op. cit.

⁶⁵ SLN, “SUNY Learning Network.” <http://sln.suny.edu>

enhanced learning outcomes;

- Technology hosting, management, development, and maintenance on SUNY-wide servers;
- Partnerships with SUNY campus faculty and staff to provide unparalleled online learning experiences at accredited New York State Institutions; and
- Helpdesk services for both students and faculty who participate in the SUNY Learning Network. This support gives SUNY SLN online students the opportunity to work in virtual classrooms that foster intensive interaction, individual attention, high standards, and enhanced learning outcomes.

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING SLN falls under purview of the Office of the Provost of the SUNY system and does not have separate administration.⁶⁶

TRANSFER POLICIES Course equivalencies are tables of courses that are transferable among institutions. In order to receive credit at your SUNY transfer campus for a course completed at another institution, that course must first be determined to be “equivalent” to a course offered at the SUNY transfer campus. Final determination of transfer credit acceptance is ultimately made by the campus registrar. SLN provides an equivalency table and search function to calculate how coursework may transfer.⁶⁷

ACCREDITATION POLICIES Degrees are awarded by the “home campus” and are accredited by the State University of New York. SLN does not issue degrees. Tuition costs, including registration, cost-per-credit, and online learning fees vary from campus to campus.⁶⁸

TEXAS (VCT)

HISTORY AND LEGAL AUTHORITY Founded in fall 1998, the Virtual College of Texas (VCT) is a collaborative of Texas community and technical colleges; it is not a separate, independent entity. The consortium is operated by the [Texas Association of Community Colleges](#).

CONSORTIUM ROLE VCT’s role is to increase access to higher education and improve student success through sharing of eLearning resources among Texas two-year colleges. These resources include courses, programs, instructors, technology, and administrative and technical support.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ SLN, “Online Course Catalog.” http://sln.suny.edu/oc/oc_overview.shtml

⁶⁷ SUNY, “Course Equivalencies.” http://www.suny.edu/student/transfer_equiv.cfm#results

⁶⁸ SLN, “Overview.” http://sln.suny.edu/dg/dg_overview.shtml

⁶⁹ VCT, “What is it?” <https://www.vct.org/students/whatisvct.html>

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING The Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) holds governance authority over VCT, ensuring that it operates according to principles it establishes. The TACC-VCT relationship is maintained as follows:

- College presidents and chancellors represent their respective colleges in TACC;
- The TACC eLearning Committee, composed of college CEOs and other high-level college administrators, provides executive direction to VCT staff and to the TACC eLearning Council regarding VCT operations, major initiatives, and special projects;
- The eLearning Committee Chair represents VCT to the TACC general in its quarterly meetings;
- The TACC eLearning Council proposes annual strategic plans for VCT and consults with VCT staff in their implementation, as approved by TACC; and
- The Director of VCT reports to the President of TACC and works closely with the Chair of the TACC eLearning Committee to address issues related to new initiatives and overall strategic actions.

The VCT office and staff are hosted and administratively supported by Austin Community College.⁷⁰

TRANSFER POLICIES Through inter-institutional collaborative arrangements, most of the programs allow students to start at their local community colleges to get on paths toward online degrees or certificates offered by other Texas community colleges. Collaborative programs provide students with convenient, local access to programs offered by public two-year colleges throughout Texas.⁷¹

ACCREDITATION POLICIES All colleges of the VCT collaborative are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges, Commission on Colleges (SACS). VCT itself is not accredited because it is not an independent institution. In a statewide review of VCT, SACS affirmed that individual colleges' practices regarding inter-institutional course sharing through VCT meets SACS requirements and standards.⁷²

⁷⁰ VCT, "Management." <https://www.vct.org/students/vctmanagement.html>

⁷¹ VCT, "Services." <https://www.vct.org/students/vctservices.html>

⁷² VCT, "Accreditation Status." <https://www.vct.org/students/vctstatus.html>

WISCONSIN (UWC ONLINE)

HISTORY AND LEGAL AUTHORITY	UW Colleges Online was created in 1998 when, in an effort to make courses more accessible to students, three popular courses were offered online. Three years later, in April 2001, UW Colleges Online received accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools to offer the entire program online. ⁷³
CONSORTIUM ROLE	Notably, UWC Online offers a truly separate “online college” for basic AA degree requirements that does not require registering at a “home campus.” ⁷⁴ Overall, however, UWC Online is quite similar to other state consortia.
ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING	UWC Online has a separate administration. ⁷⁵
TRANSFER POLICIES	The UW Colleges AAS degree fulfills the university-wide, college, school and general education breadth requirements for most bachelor’s degree programs and is widely accepted by other institutions, including those within and beyond the University of Wisconsin System.
ACCREDITATION POLICIES	Fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, a Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, UW Colleges Online adheres to the Guidelines for Distance Education espoused by the North Central Association (NCA) Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. ⁷⁶

⁷³ UWC Online, “History.” <http://www.online.uwc.edu/about/overview/history>

⁷⁴ UWC Online, “Application Process.” <http://www.online.uwc.edu/admissions/application>

⁷⁵ UWC Online, “Office Directory.” <http://www.online.uwc.edu/about/office-directory>

⁷⁶ UWC Online, “Accreditation.” <http://www.online.uwc.edu/about/overview/accreditation>

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