



FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES DISTANCE EDUCATION ALLIANCE Distance Education Project Overview

Background

Data collected and analyzed by the Texas Education Agency and the State Board for Educator Certification indicates the following:

- 638 or 19.17 % of the state's family and consumer sciences teachers were eligible to retire after the 2000-2001 school year; an additional 624 or a total of 37.92% were eligible to retire after the 2005-2006 school year; 55.35% of the discipline's teachers will be eligible to retire by the end of the 2010-2011 school year;
- 33.3% of those teaching family and consumer sciences courses are teaching without a certificate in the area; and
- an increasing number of schools in all areas of the state report unfilled teaching positions due to the unavailability of family and consumer sciences teachers.

Project Activities

In an effort to address various teacher supply/demand/preparation issues, the Texas Education Agency funded a project that has resulted in the establishment of a statewide inter-institutional system for providing web-based distance education courses preparatory for certification to teach Family and Consumer Sciences Education. This system, formally named the Family and Consumer Sciences Distance Education Alliance (FCS Alliance), involves voluntary participation of ten universities that have teacher preparation programs for the discipline. The following universities are participating in the FCS Alliance as part of their teacher preparation program:

Lamar University	Texas Southern University
Sam Houston State University	Texas State University
Stephen F. Austin State University	Texas Tech University
Tarleton State University	Texas Woman's University
Texas A&M University - Kingsville	

The Family and Consumer Sciences Distance Education Alliance has the following purposes:

- to address the shortage of certified teachers for Family and Consumer Sciences Education,
- to enhance existing campus-based teacher preparation programs by providing web-based course options to accommodate scheduling needs of campus-based students, customize courses reflecting content needs that are unique to teacher certification specializations, and offset infrequency of campus-based course offerings resulting from low enrollments, and
- to allow individuals otherwise unable to obtain family and consumer sciences certification due to schedule and proximity constraints to pursue a degree plan including a full compliment of content specialization and discipline-specific professional development courses available through distance delivery arrangements cooperatively offered by institutions across the state.

Through the FCS Alliance, the following primary tasks have been achieved:

- Consistent with standards adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification, the competencies necessary to teach family and consumer sciences have been collaboratively identified to serve as the standard for teacher preparation and certification programs and FCS Alliance initiatives.
- Basic agreement on a user-friendly infrastructure for the multi-institutional system has been reached. The infrastructure will have the following basic characteristics:
 - ✓ Students are able to access all distance education courses in the statewide system through registration at the institution in whose certification program they are enrolled (referred to as the home institution);

- ✓ Consistent with a funding mechanism identified by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to accommodate distance education cooperation among universities, the home institution will retain tuition and fees and the institution providing the distance education course will count student credit hours/headcount; and
- ✓ The home institution will record the grade and credit for distance education courses on the student transcript.
- ✓ A management committee with ongoing responsibility for decision making, coordination, and oversight for the alliance will be established with each participating institution having one member.
- ✓ The management committee has delineated responsibilities applicable to home institutions and course provider institutions relative to student services, availability of textbooks and other resources, technical support, special timelines, etc.

Note: This infrastructure allows students to take advantage of courses provided at multiple institutions without jeopardy of inconvenience/penalty due to admission and registration at multiple institutions, transfer credit hour caps, residency requirements, financial aid requirements, and magnification of costs due to duplication of fees from enrolling at multiple institutions.

- To maximize inter-institutional coordination and resource utilization, pertinent web-based distance education courses available through community colleges and universities have been identified.
- A total of 22 web-based courses are available through the FCS Alliance.

Opportunities for Non-Alliance and Non-Resident Enrollment

Students desiring to enroll in distance education courses but not enrolled in a teacher preparation program through an FCS Alliance institution may do so, on a space availability basis, by enrolling directly at the institution offering the desired course. Centralized, one-stop registration for courses at multiple institutions is available only for students enrolled in a teacher preparation program through an FCS Alliance institution. Students who are not Texas residents must enroll directly at the institution offering the distance education course and are subject to non-resident tuition rates.

Further Information

To access distance education courses through the FCS Alliance, individuals should contact the participating teacher preparation institution of their choice (refer to <http://www.fcsalliance.org/links.html> for contact information). The faculty advisor will provide information about certification plan requirements at that institution, how distance education courses can be utilized to satisfy those requirements, and procedures for accessing the one-stop, inter-institutional registration system. Also, a web site is available to provide information about the FCS Alliance as well as course availability and schedule of offerings. That web site address is: <http://www.fcsalliance.org>.

General questions can be addressed to:

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