

Summary: End of Audit oral presentation, July 31, 2008

1. An oral presentation by the legislative Audit Team reviewing Distance Education at UA was presented on July 31, 2008 (10:30 a.m. – 12: 00 Noon) Present for UA; VP's Redman, Pitman, Julius, Steve Smith, Kate Ripley, Saichi Oba, Gwen White, Ramona McAfee, Nikki Pittman (chair)
2. The purpose of the meeting, as expressed by the audit team was to “wind down the audit” provide general findings, conclusions and recommendations, and insure the end-of-audit findings (a precursor to the management letter which is expected in late September) are “realistic”. The Legislative Audit team provided background for the audit, discussed a brief legislative history, highlighted the data/ surveys, reports, etc., examined by the audit team, and expressed thanks to the UA for being highly cooperative

3. Major Findings:

- a. The University gets high marks for studying itself and attendant distance education issues, through the years, and low marks for implementing solutions to issues surfaced in such studies.
- b. Barriers exist between MAU's, “in regard to distance education, each campus is a silo”, and these barriers present challenges to making distance education at UA more student centric (as opposed to campus centric).
- c. Competition between campuses is being driven, in part, by the metrics employed to reward student headcount. Incentives are needed to promote campus collaboration rather than competition.
- d. Much has been accomplished to date.

4. Specific Recommendations:

* The UA must continue to utilize a centralized system wide (with broad constituent representation) body which will oversee and lead a “student centric”, as opposed to the current model of “campus centric”, approach to distance education.

* Incentives (related to metrics used to reward campuses, assign resources and the like) must be reengineered and deployed in a manner which enhances collaboration and cooperation rather than competition.

* Additional technological support, training and related support services for faculty and administrators are recommended. For example, more common approaches, practices and definitions are needed across the system; a “best practices” website should be employed; more generic, common and consistent information on distance education should be available on respective MAU

websites; the banner system needs to employee common definitions, more consistent coding, etc; system wide “terminology” is recommended.

* The legislative audit team also discussed areas of excellence within distance education, the commitment of faculty, “awesome” progress to date, and other accolades in regard to distance education delivery.

* The timeline for the management letter, responses and delivery of written reports, when the report will become public, and the like, were discussed

Submitted by D. Julius