<div align="center">

Attachment B

Summary of Discussion on Distance Education

By the Information and Instructional technology Planning Group

Meeting Held August 23, 2001

</div>

At the direction of the Information Technology Executive Committee (ITEC), a subgroup of the Information and Instructional Technology Planning Group (IITPG) met on Thursday, August 24, 2001 to discuss distance education. The discussion centered principally upon on-line courses, an area of great emphasis of CCHE. This document summarizes the major points that emerged from that discussion, issues that should continue to be discussed, and concludes with an indication of the diversity of opinion still remaining within the IITPG.

1. Major Points that Emerged from the Discussion

1. Market – What is CSU's market for on-line education? In this regard, the group felt that it was important that in all discussions regarding on-line education, it be made clear whether the goal of any activity is: 1) competing for other existing or new students (i.e. those presently enrolled elsewhere than CSU or those presently not enrolled anywhere), 2) competing to preserve students currently enrolled at CSU (i.e. to prevent students "drifting" toward others' on-line courses), or 3) transforming our own RI courses. The issue arose of how seriously do we wish to compete with CU-Online, as CU-Online and the Community Colleges already offer many courses on-line.

2. "Low Hanging Fruit" - The current, interim strategy that the group favors and agree upon is a conservative approach, identifying areas in which to experiment, rather than an aggressive approach of transforming a large number of courses. The physicians motto, "First do no harm," comes to mind in this regard. The suggested approach focuses on:
   a. "Niche" areas - In niche areas, where CSU has exclusive expertise, such as forestry, agriculture and perhaps the life sciences. The caveat is that the condition that *the University must be uniquely qualified* is necessary but not sufficient - the "student demand" for the course must still exist.
   b. Graduate Education - In the graduate area, there may clearly be benefits to be obtained in areas where either instructors or students (or both) are in short supply. Sharing courses (e.g. via real-time interactive video) will provide additional students, perhaps over the threshold needed to teach the class. Moreover, sharing instruction among two or more faculty reduces overall work load, allowing faculty potentially to be "spread" across more courses. Further, graduate students are typically sufficiently mature and respond well to education at a distance. Other institutions with which to discuss this would be the University of Colorado at Boulder and the Colorado School of Mines. The on-line graduate programs in Computer Science and Electrical and Computer Engineering currently being developed might fall into this category. Other areas should be explored.
   c. High-impact areas – The group suggests that selective high-impact courses be targeted for transformation. The degree completion program falls into this area. Another current project is transforming CO 150, where we have special expertise and it is often difficult to populate all sections with faculty.

3. More data – CCHE data over the last several years indicates an approximate annual doubling of enrollments in on-line courses, and decay in enrollments in other delivery mechanisms. Revenue from all of higher education in the state in on-line enrollments in FY 2000 was estimated at $8 million, about 1% of total revenue for all of higher education in the state. Burns was instructed to obtain more data from CCHE, e.g. how many enrollments in courses of what type. Also, the group recommends that Enrollment Services be requested to supply information about transfer credits, as an element to be considered in these deliberations. Furthermore, Enrollment Services should be asked to assess the feasibility of capturing information on transfer courses, including the institution, whether the course was an on-line course, etc.

4. Facilitating the transformation – The discussion occurred of appropriate methods in which the administration might influence the transformation. One method discussed is that the Provost can tie faculty positions to

requirements that selected courses be transformed and maintained up to date. Other methods also exist. For example, an annual award for efficient and effective implementation of on-line technology (akin to the annual Advising Awards) could be created and funded at a modest level (e.g. $1,000 to $2,000). Also, as other institutions in Colorado have done, transformation of selected courses could be solicited by Requests for Proposal and funded at appropriate levels.

2. Issues

Other issues emerged during the discussion

1. Carefully track CCHE activities – As distance education is a very significant emphasis of CCHE, the group feels that it is extremely important to continue to track developments in on-line education locally and nationally, and continue to deliberate about approaches.
2. Face-to-face residential instruction - There was significant discussion about whether the University's strategy should be to define ourselves as an institution that offers excellent face-to-face residential instruction, and that we should eschew a major or even modest effort in the on-line arena. Perhaps students and parents might prefer face-to-face learning, and be willing to pay a premium for it. The group felt that this idea has considerable merit and deserves additional consideration.
3. Cost – It is assumed by some, with little or no supporting data, that delivering education on-line is less expensive than delivering it face-to-face. As there can be significant development cost to transform a course, reduction of cost can only occur at sufficiently large scale (e.g. many enrollments). Discussions ensued of the quality of education in large on-line courses, along with the quality of education in large lecture courses, with no significant conclusions emerging.
4. Survey students – A discussion ensued about the feasibility of surveying students to assess whether they would be willing to pay extra for face-to-face instruction. Many issues were raised with how difficult this might be. Also, perhaps a more appropriate group to survey might be parents. Although we acknowledge the inherent difficulties, this might assist the University in devising an over-arching strategy for how aggressively to pursue distance education, thereby rendering this issue sufficiently important to keep it on our agenda.
5. Partial transformation – The group discussed the partial transformation of RI courses, and whether this should be our focus, instead of fully transforming selected courses. The discussion spilled over into the intrinsic value of the web to the University, i.e. whether web content in courses is worthy of pursuit on it own merit. The group felt that these were largely faculty issues. The discussion then shifted to the immediate concern of reacting to CCHE's mandate, i.e. on the extrinsic value of a central approach. As CCHE's emphasis is clearly courses that are totally on line, this item was discussed only briefly.
6. RI vs. DEO – A discussion about the appropriate "dividing line" between DEO and RI courses resulted in the judgment from Maher that if a course were greater than about 10% face-to-face, then it should be an RI enrollment, and not a DEO enrollment.
7. Blurring – There is a significant blurring occurring between RI and on-line courses, as RI courses are being transformed to varying degrees by faculty. This issue deserves attention, particularly regarding the enterprise status of DEO.
8. National Initiatives - There are major national initiatives to facilitate sharing of on-line material (e.g. see Project Merlot http://www.merlot.org). The University should continually assess to what degree it should be participating in these activities (the material is available for free).

3. Diversity of Opinion

Diverse and strong opinions emerged from the group. This is typical of the diversity of opinion on this matter in virtually any group setting. The discussion was characteristic of the national debate ongoing on this issue. Until opinion "gels" nationally, it likely will not "gel" at CSU. The continuum of the difference of opinion is spans from one end of the spectrum, where some feel that the web (i.e. on-line courses) is simply just another technology that can be used to deliver content and that the web is fundamentally no different than any of the other technologies that have been used heretofore to deliver education - many (if not all, excepting the chalk board and the white board), others who feel that the web is fundamentally different from the other delivery mechanisms, due to its convenience, ubiquity and being

under the control of individual content developers. Until an opinion about this solidifies, all felt that we should not be overly aggressive in a "rush to judgment" with a major effort.

4. Suggested Action Items

The action items below are presented for ITEC's approval.

1. Burns will request additional detail from CCHE of on-line enrollments.
2. Burns will explore with Enrollment Services obtaining more detail about the number and nature of transfer courses, particularly whether on-line transfer courses can be identified.
3. Proceed with the transformation of CO 150, as planned.
4. Develop and publish a formal policy defining the dividing line between an RI course and a DEO course.
5. A strategy to use material developed in RI courses in DEO courses should be discussed. Perhaps the first priority in this area should be to define our starting position by assessing quantitatively the degree to which RI courses have been transformed. Once this has been established, it should be quantitatively tracked over time. Specifically, the degree to which the 800 on-line courses in WebCT have been transformed should be assessed, i.e. which have just general information (instructor contact, time, day, etc) only, which have this plus the syllabus on-line, which actually have content on-line (how many lectures), which use and to what degree on-line chat and threaded discussion groups, and which use on-line testing? It is also imperative that quality, in addition to quantity, be assessed, both the quality of the on-line materials and the quality of learning using on-line materials.
6. A strategy to engage the campus in this discussion and debate is needed.

Continue to discuss and debate this issue at ITEC meetings.