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Welcome to the Texas Journal of Distance Learning

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“Texas is a state of mind. Texas is an obsession. Above all, Texas is a nation in every sense of the word... For all its enormous range of space, climate, and physical appearance, and for all the internal squabbles, contentions, and strivings, Texas has a tight cohesiveness perhaps stronger than any other section of America. Rich, poor, Panhandle, Gulf, city, country, Texas is the obsession, the proper study and the passionate possession of all Texans.” — John Steinbeck.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the inaugural issue of The Texas Journal of Distance Learning. We are launching this new online journal to showcase the exciting and diverse work of educators in Texas who are helping chart the course of distance learning. Although the journal will focus on projects and programs in Texas, we hope that its appeal and usefulness will extend far beyond the state’s borders. In the spirit of Mr. Steinbeck, we hope that the resources found in this journal will not only be the “proper study and the passionate possession of all Texans,” but will be of interest to educators, students, and researchers in other parts of the country and all over the world.

In this first issue, you will find the first series of articles that describe successful distance learning programs and reflect a growing body of practice and investigation of distance education processes and methodologies. All of us involved in education, in Texas and beyond, are witnessing enormous changes in the way educators teach and students learn. We are seeing dramatic change in the educational landscape as new and often bewildering instructional technologies continue to appear. At the same time, we are watching growing numbers of institutions seek to use these new technologies to attract students to new forms of education, and away from the traditional classroom. And no where is this more obvious than in the world of distance learning. The challenges facing today’s instructors and administrators are dizzying and it is our hope that the articles found in this journal may help us not only make sense of these new developments but also guide us in our future decision making.

In future issues, we will be adding additional resources we hope you will find useful. An online discussion forum will be implemented where readers may discuss new trends in distance learning, ask questions, provide insight and share ideas and experiences. In addition, a section devoted to student research on distance learning topics will offer readers an opportunity to see what types of research studies are currently being conducted at educational institutions in Texas. A calendar of distance learning events will also be added to help readers stay abreast of important distance learning events taking place in the state.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of the hardworking individuals that have made this journal possible, including Managing Editor, Philip Ruthstrom; Editorial Board members at the University

of Houston, William Chernish, Sylvia Hysong, Consuelo Waight, and Marshall Schott; and all of the members of the editorial team representing institutions of higher learning throughout Texas.

As this first issue makes its debut, we invite you to become part of our Texas distance learning community. Whether you live in Texas, or just wish you did, we would like to hear from you. If you have questions, comments or anything you would like us to know about, please feel free to contact us. We are excited about The Texas Journal of Distance Learning, and we hope you will be too!

Bernard Robin, Executive Editor
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