

Live Campus Classes on Videotape Provides New Outreach From State University to Community Colleges and Distant Learners

Mary M. Leach, Thomas P. Drinka
and Patrick M. Stout

Introduction

The College of Applied Sciences at Western Illinois University has implemented the Applied Sciences Televised Education program. Commodity Markets and Futures Grading (Agricultural Economics 447G) was video-taped in 1987, and Marketing Grain and Livestock Products (Agricultural Economics 442G) was video-taped in 1988.

Additional College of Applied Sciences course offerings are planned by the Applied Sciences Televised Education (hereinafter, "ASTE") program, and permanent funding is being sought for the program. Additionally, Western Illinois University (hereinafter, "WIU") is entering into cooperative teaching programs with community colleges throughout the state, whereby WIU courses are offered at these institutions via video-tape. The purpose of this article is to describe the ASTE delivery method, costs, and potential regional instructional impact.

The WIU ASTE Program

The WIU ASTE program is patterned after similar programs which have been available for over a decade from North Carolina State University and the University of Idaho, both of which offer upper division and graduate video-taped courses. Following consultation with North Carolina State University personnel, the WIU College of Applied Sciences implemented the ASTE program with the video-taping of AGEC 447G.

Course Videotaping

Courses are video-taped in the WIU Broadcast and Educational Communication Services studio during class meetings with on-campus students who are enrolled in the course; the studio is set up so as to emulate a typical classroom setting. Lectures and student interaction are spontaneous, and no attempt is made to generate unrealistic, "flashy" tapes by editing and/or by taping lectures more than once.

Taping is accomplished with a Director and four cameras. Three of the cameras are operated by studio personnel; the fourth is ceiling-mounted, and is utilized to view visuals. At the time of taping, several color recordings are made on 1/2" VHS cassettes; these video-tapes are dispensed to the off-campus students. Additionally, one 3/4" color recording is made to be utilized as a master copy which remains on campus.

Leach is the associate dean of the College of Applied Sciences, Drinka is a professor in the Department of Agriculture, and Stout is the associate director of Broadcast and Educational Communication Services at Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois 61455.

Delivery Method

The off-campus student is able to enroll for three semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit, or for non-credit. Video-tapes — along with course handouts, assignments, and examinations — are delivered to the student's home or work-place by United Parcel Service. Each of the two ASTE Agricultural Economics courses consists of 18 two-hour video-tapes.

Courses are offered to off-campus students three times per year. During a two-month period, the student is sent video-tapes each week, and is given two weeks to view them at the convenience of the student; thus, beginning in the third week, the student is expected to begin returning tapes to campus via United Parcel Service. Completed assignments and examinations are sent to campus along with tapes. The registration fee includes the cost of these shipments.

The instructor maintains scheduled office hours for the off-campus students, who are able to telephone the instructor using an intrastate, toll-free number. This method of interaction has been found to satisfy the needs of off-campus students.

Program Costs

Once the initial expense of video-taping has been incurred, the course is shelved and can be offered during subsequent semesters. During these subsequent semesters, most program expenses are variable and are a function of the number of students enrolled. Table 1 reviews these costs.

First Semester Estimated Costs

In the semester during which the course is video-taped, WIU ASTE costs are estimated to total \$7255; this estimate assumes that ASTE enrollment is 15 off-campus students. The expense of studio use plus the purchase of 1/2-inch VHS cassettes (at \$5.50 per cassette) amounts to two-thirds of this total estimated cost.

One student worker is employed to coordinate the distribution and receipt of tapes, handouts, and

Table 1. Average Estimated WIU ASTE Program Costs, 1987/88 and 1988/89 Academic Years.

Item	First Semester	Subsequent Semesters
Studio	\$3375	
Tapes	1485	
Student Worker	536	\$ 536
Brochure Printing	96	96
Bulk Mail	120	120
Handouts	225	225
UPS	398	398
Envelopes	30	30
Instructor Salary	990	990
Total	\$7255	\$2395

Note: variable costs assume enrollments of 15 ASTE students per semester.

examinations; this expense is \$3.25 per hour for 20 hours per week during the two-month period of the course offering. Additionally, 1500 one-page brochures describing the courses are printed and sent via bulk mail to potential off-campus students. And, course handouts are sent with the first shipment of video-tapes; duplication of this material costs five cents per page.

The United Parcel Service expense reflects the shipping of course materials to off-campus students located throughout Illinois, plus the returning of video-tapes to campus. Address labels are affixed to envelopes for UPS shipments to and from students. Finally, faculty compensation is \$66 per off-campus student.

Subsequent Semester Estimated Costs

After the course has been shelved, WIU ASTE costs are estimated to total \$2395 per semester. This estimate assumes 15 off-campus students per semester.

Break-even Registration Fees and Enrollment

As already noted, both ASTE Agriculture courses considered herein are offered to off-campus students three times per year. Thus, ASTE costs are estimated to total \$7255 in the semester of video-taping and to total \$2395 in each subsequent semester, until the courses are again video-taped.

The WIU ASTE registration fee is the total cost to the off-campus student, with the exception of textbooks. The student is required to secure course textbooks from the WIU Bookstore.

If the registration fee is set at \$250 per course, break-even is estimated to occur after the course has been offered four times. Or, if the fee is set at \$300 per course, break-even is estimated to occur after the course has been offered three times.

Potential Regional Impact

Since its implementation in 1987, the ASTE program has served students in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, and Indiana. Additionally, Western Illinois University has begun to enter into cooperative instructional programs with community colleges throughout Illinois, whereby ASTE video-taped courses are offered at these institutions. These institutions lease video-taped courses from the ASTE program in one of two manners: either via a fixed fee per semester plus a small additional fee per enrolled student, or via a fixed fee per student. The latter arrangement is attractive to those institutions whose enrollment in the ASTE course is below an agreed-upon number.

These institutions offer their students the option of registering for undergraduate credit or graduate credit, or for non-credit. Those students who enroll for undergraduate credit or for non-credit have video-taped instruction delivered via faculty and facilities of those institutions, while those who enroll for graduate credit are registered as WIU students and have instruction delivered directly by the WIU ASTE program.

Summary

The Western Illinois University Applied Sciences Televised Education program is designed to provide the off-campus professional with undergraduate and graduate courses. Courses are delivered to the student via video cassettes, and instruction is at the convenience of the student. The program has been demonstrated to be a cost-effective delivery method that satisfies the needs of off-campus students who are unable to attend class on campus.

A NEED

Student Safety in Agricultural College Science Classes

James H. Daniels

In recent years there has been an increase in concern among college and university faculty regarding both tort liability and their legal responsibilities to students. This concern should be of particular importance to the agricultural faculty — especially those who teach laboratory classes. Many of the routine student activities which occur in agricultural labs pose potential health or injury hazards to the students. Some examples of these are working with toxic chemicals, flammable materials and compounds, operating electrical or mechanical devices as well as machinery, handling and caring for livestock, traveling on field trips, etc. As reported by Connors, (1981), those educational activities involving hazardous components or devices require special emphasis be placed on safety assurances by faculty members.

Agricultural faculty members have a direct responsibility to insure the safety and well-being of their students. The responsibility stems from three bases: moral, professional, and legal.

Moral Basis

In a morally conscious society, every individual is expected to carefully safeguard their actions and decisions in a manner that will at all times minimize the risk of creating a hazard to others. It almost goes without saying, no rational, sane, or moral individual would intentionally fail to exercise a level or standard of care that would result in injury to another person. Traditionally and historically, agricultural programs and faculty have taken pride in their concern for, and interest in, the individual students and their well-being. The moral responsibility for providing a safe learning environment is a major element of this tradition.

Professional Basis

In the interest of maintaining the high standards and principles of good scientific agricultural programs at all educational levels, it is the professional responsibility of every faculty member and administrator to constantly monitor and update all areas

Daniels is an associate professor in the Department of Agricultural Education, Clemson University, Clemson, S.C.