

To: Council of Academic Vice Presidents
From: John Pritchett
Date: October 29, 2009
Subject: Test Center Consortium for Proctoring Online Exams

In order to advance and ensure the integrity of distance education in the state of Florida, I would like to propose the creation of a statewide consortium of testing centers to proctor exams in online courses. Studies show that cheating is pervasive at institutions of higher education in the United States. Although claims that cheating is especially rampant in online courses are largely anecdotal and not supported by data, many faculty have the perception that student assessment in online courses is suspect, because greater opportunities exist for academic dishonesty. As a result, many faculty are opposed or reluctant to expand online learning. Many online courses offered by SUS institutions require exam proctoring, but no statewide mechanism exists to coordinate proctoring services. (The Florida Distance Learning Task Force stressed the need for greater collaboration in test proctoring in its Final Report.) Other states, however, already have test proctoring consortia in place. The Tennessee Board of Regents Campus Collaborative is but one example.

The details of the structure and operation would have to be ironed out, but we might consider the following as starting points for our discussion:

1. SUS and state college testing centers would make proctoring available to students in online courses at member institutions.
2. Proctoring in online courses would continue to be at the option of the instructor.
3. Students would make arrangements for proctoring at local testing centers. Out-of-state students would make similar arrangements at local institutions (in most cases, members of the National College Testing Association; many public libraries also offer proctoring services).
4. The proctoring window for final exams would be 7-10 days. It would be impossible to accommodate an entire class at the same time. Expanded evening hours might be needed.
5. There would be modest charges for proctoring services. Perhaps a differential fee could be instituted: \$5 for in-house students, \$10 for students at other Florida institutions. Fees for out-of-state proctoring would be determined by the local proctoring institution.