

# Transportation Education and Training Partnerships

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The steering committee discussed intermodal partnerships in broad terms. What I offer is an exploratory look at the nature of existing intermodal partnerships, specifically collaborations between industry and academia to provide intermodal transportation education and training programs in an undergraduate, graduate, or continuing education context.

I surveyed a dozen programs that were a judgment sample of a larger group. This sample included one doctoral program whose spokesperson asserted that intermodalism is incorporated across the curriculum in all areas. One-fourth of the sample involved executive-level continuing education programs, including two certificate programs that involve a series of coherent, curriculum-driven continuing education courses. A good example is the global logistics and intermodal transportation certificate offered through California State University at Long Beach, which has a formal partnership with the Port of Long Beach as part of their certifi-

cate program. Another example is the arrangement between Georgia Southern University and the Georgia Freight Bureau. About half of the institutions sampled have industry advisory boards and committees.

Some of the institutions offer industry internships, which can be a very innovative and useful collaborative mechanism. Internships can take many forms, from highly organized, formal, structured programs to relatively informal kinds of arrangements. They provide an opportunity for faculty to remain current in industry practices in intermodal transportation. About two-thirds of those queried use guest lecturers, adjunct professors, and executives-in-residence. From an academic point of view, industry financial support for curriculum and program development is desired. All of the institutions contacted reported some informal academe-industry contact, which is reassuring and helps counter the ivory tower stereotype of professors of transportation and logistics as being wrapped up in theory and out of touch with the real world.

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## SUMMARY OF DIALOGUE WITH AUDIENCE

Presenters were asked to offer comments on whether distance learning, coupled with technology, was likely to be an increasing trend in intermodal transportation education and training. Although often touted as a cost-effective way to offer programs, distance learning and associated technology requirements can be very expen-

sive. In addition, the time component for development and for interaction with the students can be significant. In some cases, it can require almost one-on-one learning, leaving less time for development in the areas of continuing education or executive development. Responses suggested that some form of distance learning is being considered or implemented in many academic institutions; the following examples were given:

- Penn State offers correspondence courses that support distance learning, and a four-course credit certificate is being developed that will be offered through distance learning delivery. In addition, college credits from logistics schools can be applied to AST&L certification. There are plans to link the Penn State distance learning certificate with AST&L certification.

- At the College of Charleston, consideration is being given to using the college's projected investment in the distance learning technology to offer continuing education programs and intermodal transportation in the Greenville-Spartanburg industrial heart of the state.

- The Georgia Institute of Technology offers distance learning opportunities such as a master's degree in environmental engineering and several other degree programs; however, faculty must be offered incentives to get into distance learning because it does require significant time and resources.

- At Prince George's Community College in Maryland, distance learning courses have been offered for the past 5 years through an integrated continuing education program that enables development and offering of non-credit courses that easily transition and articulate into a credit program. The cost is substantial; however, as part of the statewide Bell Atlantic Lab Consortium (a statewide consortium), this particular type of "telecredit" course is something in which faculty have been trained and on which they are working with industry partners.

- In Virginia since about 1980, there has been an arrangement among four universities in Virginia—University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, Old Dominion, and Virginia Commonwealth—to offer interactive graduate courses. For example, a Virginia Tech graduate course can be taken by University of Virginia graduate students while it is being taught at Virginia Tech, and vice versa.

The term "distance learning" can encompass a multitude of approaches, making it difficult to really define what is meant by the term and what technologies are included. For example, there is an organization called the National Technological University (NTU), a consortium of 50 schools, including Georgia Tech. The consortium offers master's degrees in areas such as electrical engineering, materials science, computer science, and others, all of which are sponsored primarily by industry. The consortium also includes some of the largest technology companies, such as IBM and Lucent Technologies. NTU, which has a program focused on transportation, has been in existence for about 15 years and has granted an estimated 1,000 master's degrees in various professional areas. There are plans to extend the NTU programs into public agencies such as departments of transportation to expand the group of individuals who can benefit from distance learning education.