

North Central Distance Learning Network (NCDLN)

“Enhanced Learning Opportunities with Kan-ed Support”

KAN-ED-- WHERE KANSANS ACCESS THE INFORMATION AGE.

Barton County Community College (BCCC), like many higher education institutions, strives to provide concurrent credit opportunities to high school students throughout its service area. According to Elaine Simmons, Dean of Workforce Training & Community Education at BCCC, “Today’s students and their families expect the availability of such coursework to help ease the transition from high school to college, to stay on track with a course of study that can be completed within a reasonable time period, and to save money on classes that cost considerably more at the state’s universities.”

In 2002, BCCC partnered with five area high schools to initiate the North Central Distance Learning Network (NCDLN). The goals of the network are to: 1) create an Interactive Television (ITV) network which provides rural educators with access to synchronous interactive instruction in an efficient and cost-effective manner, 2) enhance educational opportunities for traditional and non-traditional rural students, and 3) identify future opportunities for collaborative educational projects. Original members were recipients of a Rural Utility Services (RUS) grant; funds from the grant were used to help offset ITV equipment expenses. Kan-ed funding, specifically Enhancing Technology Grant Program funds, have allowed original members to upgrade their equipment and new members to purchase the equipment required to be part of the network.

Simmons described, “Beginning with the 2003-2004 academic year, students from five high schools had the opportunity to ‘jump-start’ their college education through ITV instruction delivered by members of Barton’s full-time faculty.” Students choose up to six general education courses from the network’s offerings: English Composition I, English Composition II, General Psychology, Introduction to Sociology, College Algebra, and Public Speaking. Three hundred twenty-eight students were enrolled in the ITV courses for the 2008-2009 academic year. NCDLN now plans for the addition of career technical programs to the network offerings.

“The North Central Distance Learning Network was a dream finally realized by Barton Community College. The availability of Kan-ed grant funds was pivotal in maintaining the network’s current members as well as assisting new members to join the consortium. Without the network, Barton would no longer offer concurrent education opportunities in many of the small schools. Students in these rural communities would either lack the opportunity made available to other high school students across the state OR they would choose to ‘jump-start’ their college education through online coursework, which is suitable to some but not all students’ skills and abilities,” Simmons shared.

Simmons predicts that additional schools will apply for network membership in the future. It is likely that these schools will need the assistance of Kan-ed funds to meet the network’s equipment requirements. It is also essential that current members upgrade equipment to maintain membership and assure educational opportunities for their students. As in the past, schools will require grant assistance to meet these goals. Simmons stated, “Barton recognizes that without Kan-ed’s support, the North Central Distance Learning Network would no longer exist. Members in the network also realize the impact that Kan-ed dollars have on their students and their communities. All institutions appreciate the support that Kan-ed extends to them and look forward to future opportunities to partner for the benefit of education and career training.”

Kan-ed Annual
Evaluation Report
June 2009

Barton County
Community College

Serves:

6,500+ students,
400+ faculty

Kan-ed member since:
September 24, 2002



Kan-ed

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