Watson Library follows the ACRL guidelines for distance learning library services which were approved July, 1998.

**Philosophy**

Watson Library faculty and staff affirm that:

1. Access to adequate library services and resources is essential for the attainment of superior academic skills in post-secondary education, regardless of where students, faculty, and programs are located. Members of the distance learning community are entitled to library services and resources equivalent to those provided for students and faculty in traditional campus settings.

2. Traditional, on-campus library services, themselves, cannot be stretched to meet the library needs of distance learning students and faculty who have distinct and different challenges involving library access and information delivery.

**Management**

The administration of Northwestern State University of Louisiana bears the fiscal and administrative responsibilities, through active leadership of the Director of Libraries, to fund, staff, and supervise library services and resources in support of distance learning programs. As the principal and direct agents of implementation, the Library faculty are responsible for the following:

1. Determine and articulate to the University administration the electronic and traditional library needs of the distance learning community.
2. Prepare a written profile of the distance learning community’s library needs.
3. Develop long-range goals and objectives for distance learning services which address the needs, and determine methods to assess progress.
4. Incorporate distance learning service goals into the Library’s and University’s planning processes.
5. Involve faculty, students, and staff participating in distance learning in the planning process and evaluation.
6. Assess the existing library support for distance learning.
7. Revise collection development and acquisition policies to reflect distance learners’ needs.
8. Participate in the curriculum development and course planning process to ensure appropriate library resources are available.
9. Promote library support services to distance learning community.
10. Survey distance learning library users to monitor and assess their use of library services and degree to which needs are being met.
11. Explore initiatives for resource sharing and possible compensation for unaffiliated libraries.
12. Develop means to deliver library materials to distance education locations.
13. Work with computing services to provide necessary automation support for distance learning.
14. Create a library environment in support of teaching and learning for the distance learning community.

Finances

Northwestern State University of Louisiana should provide continuing, optimum financial support for addressing the library needs of the distance learning community sufficient to meet the specifications of the ACRL policy statement.

Personnel

Personnel involved in the management and coordination of distance learning services include president and academic vice president and provost of the institution, the director of libraries, heads of the branch libraries, the distance education librarian, and other personnel as appropriate. Northwestern State University of Louisiana should provide professional and support personnel with clearly defined responsibilities at the appropriate locations and in the number and quality necessary to attain the goals and objectives for library services to the distance learning program.

Facilities

Northwestern State University should provide facilities, equipment, and communication links sufficient in size, number, scope, and accessibility, and timeliness to reach all students and to attain the objectives of the distance learning programs. These may include agreements with non-affiliated libraries; space designated for consultants, ready reference, electronic transmission of information, computerized data base searching, interlibrary loan, and offices for library distance learning personnel; virtual library services such as web pages, electronic reserves, and internet searching.
Resources

Northwestern State University of Louisiana is responsible for providing or securing convenient, direct physical and electronic access to library materials for distance learning programs equivalent to those provided in traditional settings. Students must be able to fulfill course assignments and faculty have access to information meeting their teaching and research needs.

Among the resources that distance learners will find highly useful are the online LOUIS academic library catalogs; the online databases with full-text journals; other online full-text resources; the numerous electronic books provided through netLibrary; and materials on electronic reserves.

Services

The library services offered to the distance learning community should be designed to meet effectively a wide range of informational, bibliographic, and user needs. The following list of services, while not exhaustive, is regarded as services that are both essential and within the resources of Watson Library to provide. Additional services with be offered as needs and financial resources become available.

1. Reference Assistance - Students* are encouraged to contact Library personnel, especially reference librarians, through a special 800 number, or by electronic mail, or by fax transmission, or by written correspondence, to name but some of the methods. Inquiries that require the application of subjective or interpretative judgment, rather than factual information, will not be answered. An explanation will be sent to the student along with suggestions for alternate research methods.

   *The term “students” as used henceforth, shall refer to off-campus students exclusively.

2. Computer-based Bibliographic and Informational Services - The library maintains through the Louisiana Online University Information System (LOUIS) an online catalog and a full range of online databases which can be accessed from off-campus by another computer. Applicable passwords and other codes will be included in an information packet prepared by library personnel and given to all Distance Education students.

3. Access to Institutional and Other Networks Including the Internet - Access to “other networks” will be outside the purview of Library responsibility. All registered students are provided a computer account. However, for those students using modems and living outside the local area for dial-up through one of the University campuses, a long distance call will be necessary. Northwestern State University does not provide free long distance phone dial-up access.
4. Distance Education students, including undergraduates are extended reciprocal borrowing privileges from LALINC libraries. Distance Education supersedes a library’s designated level of reciprocity (example: A library is Level 2 but it will extend privileges to a properly identified undergraduate distance education student). The library at the institution where the distance education course is originating will be responsible for authenticating distance education patrons and issuing LALINC Reciprocal Borrowing Cards. This reciprocating library may provide additional services through arrangements made between institutions. A staff member at each institution will be designated the distance education liaison/contact point for questions from distance education students.

(From Louisiana Academic Library Information Network Consortium-Agreement for Reciprocal Borrowing Section F. Distance Education)

5. Consultation Services - Library personnel are available for consultation through a variety of means, such as those listed in paragraph one. In keeping with the philosophy of taking academic services to the student, however, librarians may find it necessary to visit sites where off-campus instruction is received, such as a classroom in a hospital or parish library, for the purpose of offering group consultation.

6. Library User Instruction - A program of library instruction designed to instill independent and effective information literacy skills, while specifically meeting the needs of the distance learning community, will be provided to distance learners. Library personnel assume that the University will provide space and facilities, either through rental or courtesy accommodation, sufficient to enable the Library’s Reference/Instruction Librarian to teach a class of students the fundamentals of library technology, as well as other relevant subject matter, at a designated off-campus site. Web-based instruction also will be provided.

7. Assistance with Non-Print Media and Equipment - See #4 and #5 above.

8. Borrowing Materials - Watson Library will provide the same borrowing privileges to distance students as those afforded to on-campus students, including interlibrary loan service. Requests for materials can be placed through the provisions of paragraph one. An e-mail format for placing requests is provided on the Library’s homepage.

9. Document Delivery - Books requested will be mailed to a library nearest the home of the requesting student. Journal articles will be transmitted through the Distance Education Electronic Delivery (DEED-net) system to an academic library designated by the student requestor. The State Library of
Louisiana has initiated a courier delivery system that will visit every library in Louisiana, as necessary.

10. Access to Reserve Materials - Watson Library provides electronic access to reserve materials through the homepage. A password obtained _____ is required.

11. Service Hours - Watson Library in Natchitoches is open 84 hours weekly. Branch libraries are located in Shreveport and near Leesville. The LOUIS catalogs, including Northwestern’s, are available from 6:00AM to midnight, Monday through Friday. All databases are available 24 hours, every day of the week.

12. Promotion of Library Services to the Distance Learning Community - Watson Library has appointed a part-time Distance Learning Librarian, who is responsible for promotion of services to this community. Communications will include such topics as policies, procedures, regulations, and information resources.