

# *Lessons Learned in Building Collaboration Initiatives for Online Learning:*

## *The HETS Consortium Experience*



**“Beyond Boundaries:  
Building Bridges of Collaboration in Higher Education”**

**10th North American Higher Education Conference  
October 12-15, 2005  
San Juan, Puerto Rico**



# Main Points

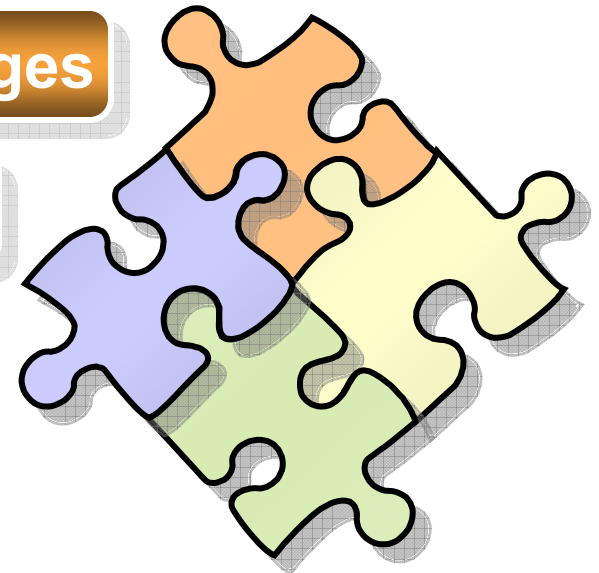
**1. HETS Background**

**2. Forging Collaboration Initiatives**

**3. Collaboration Strategies**

**4. Accomplishments & Challenges**

**5. Lessons Learned**





# About HETS

- ❖ *First bilingual distance learning consortium dedicated to serving the higher education needs of our fast-growing Hispanic communities.*
- ❖ **Mission:**
  - *Increase post-secondary education and training opportunities for Hispanics through partnerships and collaborative initiatives for distance learning and online support services.*



# Member Institutions

## ❖ 22 Member Institutions

- **US:** CA TX, NM, NY, NJ, PA, FL,
- **Puerto Rico**
- **Colombia**



**MEMBER INSTITUTIONS**





# Members



The University of New Mexico





# Historical Background

1993-95  
Inception

1995-98  
Consortium  
Type I

1998-02  
Consortium  
Type II

2002-05  
Consortium  
Type III

## ❖ Mid 90's – Inception & capacity building

- 1993 – Founded by seven universities & colleges in the US and PR
- Widen access of Latino students to higher education - distance learning
- 1995 - Funds from the U.S. Department of Commerce
- Satellite network and 9 electronic classrooms: exchange academic offerings



## ❖ Late 1990's – Organization & experimentation

- Response to technological trends in distance education
- Central office and staff
- Vision and efforts toward Internet use
- New funding for innovative project – LAAP\_FIPSE grant



## ❖ 2000 – 2005 – Consolidation & expansion

- Funding support from FIPSE
- Virtual Plaza project and academic collaboration





# Turning Point

## The LAAP Project (1998-2004)

*Learning Anytime Anywhere Partnerships  
Program*

# FIPSE

Funding for Online Courses

Faculty Online Training



e-Mentoring Program

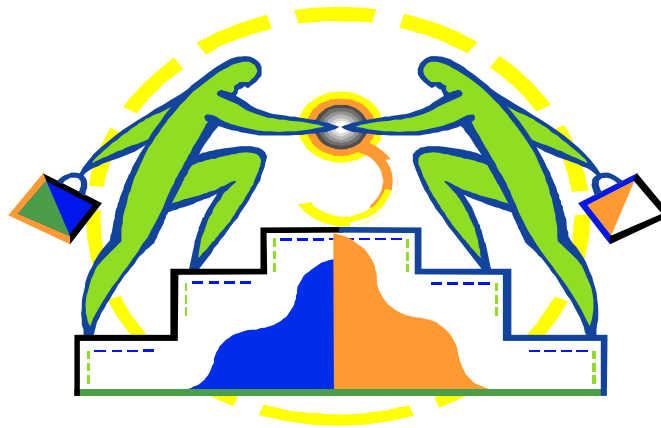
**Portal** : Virtual community for learning, collaboration and support

Online Learning Collaboration Initiatives Program



# Thinking About Collaboration

- ❖ **Development of individual online courses** at member institutions, with HETS-LAAP funds, was not necessarily the most effective strategy to increasing distance learning options for students.



- ❖ **Inter-institutional collaboration:** HETS members could create complete online programs of major benefit to Hispanic learners' needs and market demands.





# Online Learning Collaboration Initiatives

Partnership initiatives among member institutions to create unique joint online minors, continuing education certificates and professional programs.



## ❖ Respond to HETS's strategic objectives:

- Encourage and support faculty networking, training, and collaboration for distance learning across member institutions.
- Expand member institutions' interconnection capabilities for networking and collaboration.



# Program Objectives

## Academic Collaboration

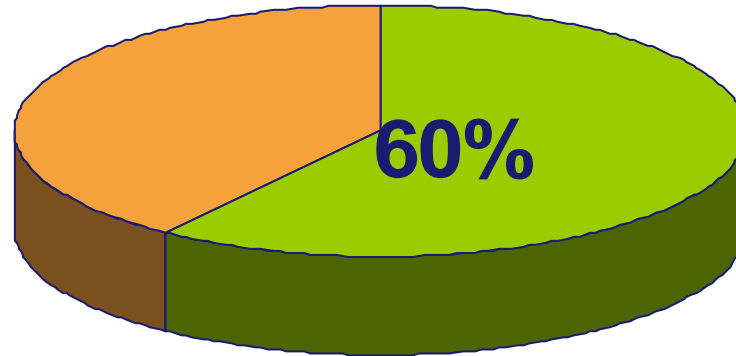
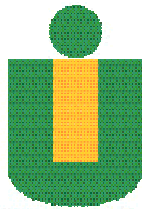


## Online Learning & Student Support

- ❖ Expand distance learning opportunities for Hispanic learners.
- ❖ Create new joint online academic programs and services that respond to their needs.
- ❖ Allow colleges to develop cost efficient alternatives to help increase their educational offerings.
- ❖ Encourage and support faculty networking, training and collaboration for distance learning across member institutions.
- ❖ Widen the online program offerings targeted to Hispanic students and professional at the national level.



# Collaboration Partners





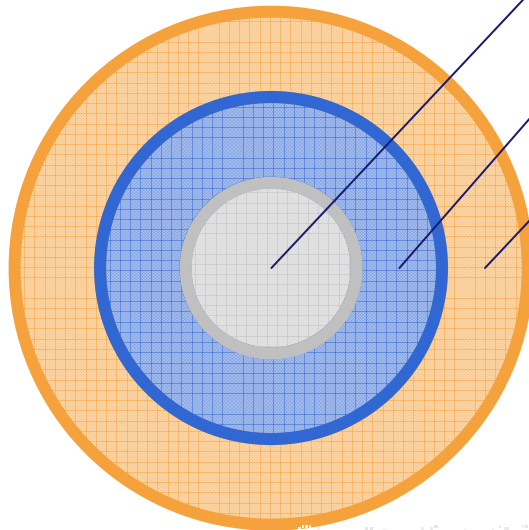
# Collaboration Structure



Hispanic Educational Telecommunications System

## Staff

- Consulting
- Monitoring
- Assessment
- Communication
- Networking
- Team-building
- Marketing
- Fundraising
- e-Mentoring



Collaborators/ Developers

LEAD Institution

Institutional Decision-Makers

- Finance
- Registrars
- Continuing Ed
- Academic Affairs

## Board of Directors

- Decision-making
- Institutional support

INSTITUTE FOR .....  
**ACADEMIC ALLIANCES**

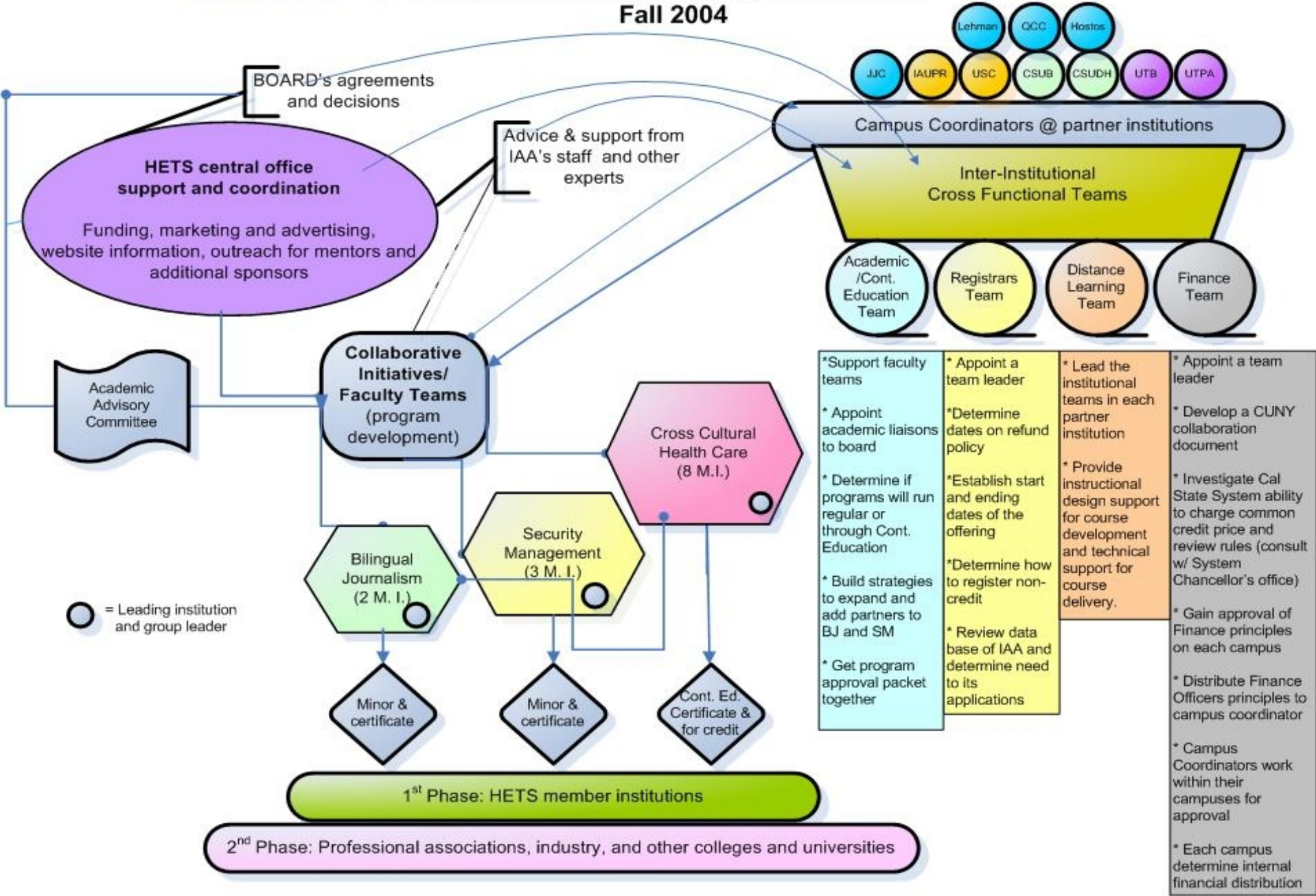
Expert consulting and advice



# COLLABORATION INITIATIVES FOR ACADEMIC JOINT OFFERINGS

## Levels of Coordination and Related Tasks

Fall 2004





# HETS Collaboration Attributes





# Forging the Collaboration Process

May – Dec 2003





# Facilitating Team-Building for Curriculum Development

January - June 2004

Phase III

Planning for 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Workshop on Reaching Policy Agreements

Setting up agreements With Collaborative Groups

Phase II



Monitoring and Supporting Collaborative Efforts

Consulting Support (IAA)

Building Virtual Teams And Trust





# **HETS Second Annual Workshop for Institutional Leaders June 21-23, New York**

**Sharing and celebrating the spirit of collaboration!**



# Seeking Institutional Support for Program Launch

June 2004 - Present

## Next Steps





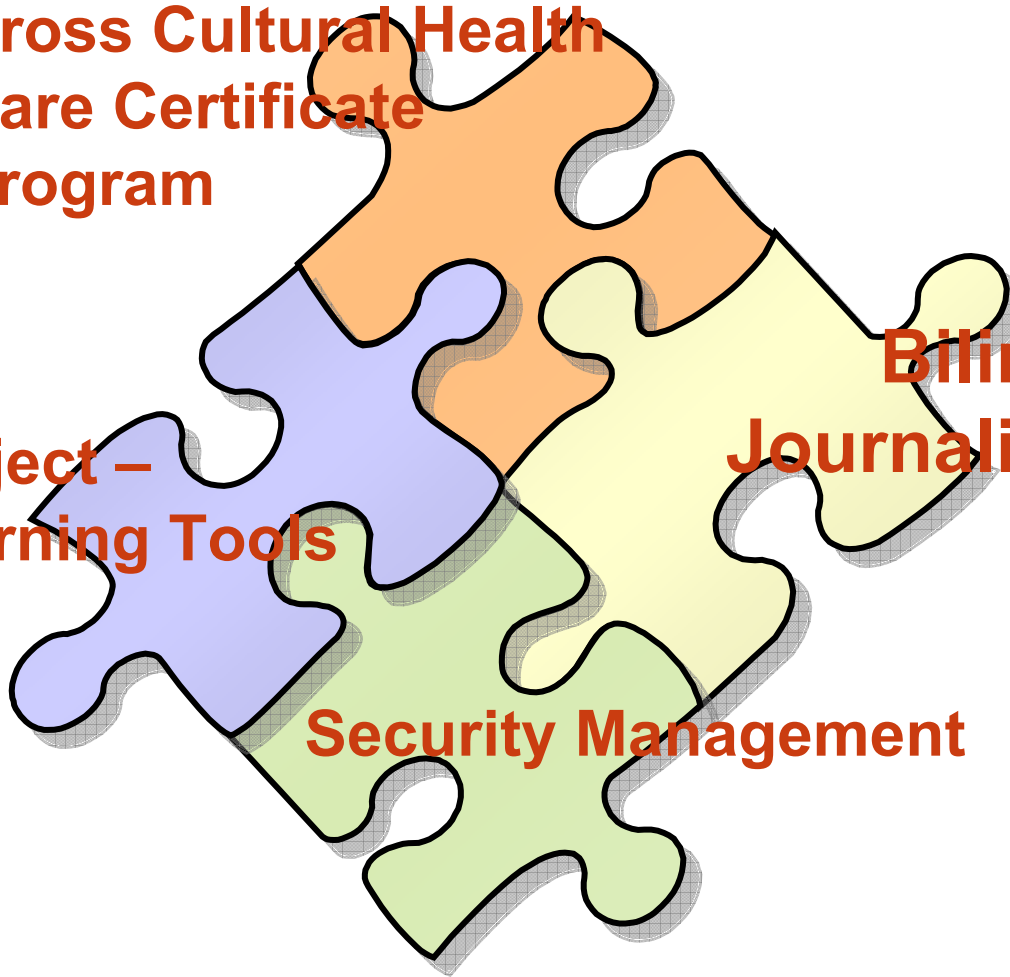
# Four Online Learning Collaboration Initiatives

**Cross Cultural Health  
Care Certificate  
Program**

**HOLA Project –  
Online Learning Tools**

**Bilingual  
Journalism Minor**

**Security Management**





## Cross Cultural Health Care



A HETS Online Learning Collaboration Initiative

### Accomplishments

- 8 out of 9 modules being completed
- Meetings between faculty and administrators to discuss policy issues
- Conversations with CUNY on policy agreements needed and how to make it work

### Challenges

- Program level
- Online Module definition
- Not enough capacity to satisfy demand
- Costing model did not work for all
- Learning assessment for each module
- Officers skeptical about the economic viability of Continuing Education offering

### Pending Agenda

- Completion of some online modules
- Benchmarking analysis on pricing
- Cross-institutional agreements on pricing, program level, credit transfers, cross-registration, and certification
- Tuition waiver contract with CUNY
- Adapt online modules to selected program level
- Establish marketing agreements among institutions
- Designate a campus coordinator to assist with program inquiries, registration, accounts payable, and revenue sharing



# Security Management Program

## Accomplishments

- All 6 courses completed
- Packet for program approval
- Involvement of administrators
- Collaboration from administrators to negotiate agreements with CUNY
- Mentor and Advisory Board contacts
- Decision to make program a for-credit certificate

## Challenges

- No funding available for translations
- Assuring all Spanish-speaking faculty can deliver the course in English
- Cross-institutional agreements on pricing, registration, delivery, degree-granting, credit transfers
- Access to CUNY databases

## Pending Agenda

- Seek institutions' approval of all courses and the for-credit certificate
- Decisions on pricing, registration, credit transfer, delivery, certificate issuing
- Sign articulation agreement
- Delivery schedule
- Agreements on marketing strategies within and beyond institutions
- Designate a campus coordinator to assist with program inquiries, registration, accounts payable, and revenue sharing



# Bilingual Journalism Program

## Accomplishments

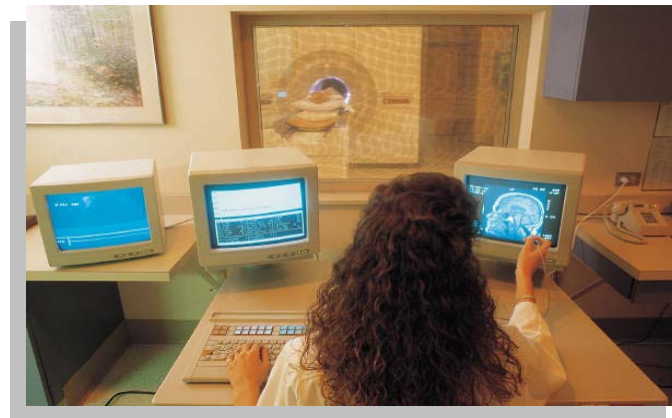
- Completion of five online courses
- Access to course enrollment system at USH and Lehman
- Mutual offering of the first two courses

## Challenges

- Policy agreements to make offer work and be delivered as a program
- Communication barriers among collaborators
- Feasibility and interest in this two-institution model
- Making program available to other member institutions

## Pending Agenda

- Evaluation of process
- Sign articulation agreement
- Establish long term delivery schedule
- Establish agreements on marketing strategies within and beyond institutions
- Designate a campus coordinator to assist with program inquiries, registration, accounts payable, and revenue sharing



# Project HOLA

## Online Learning Tools

### Accomplishments

- 6 out of 7 learning objects were produced and were uploaded in the HETS site
- Developed standards and review guidelines for the creation of other learning objects
- Worked effectively as a virtual team to coordinate a joint initiative

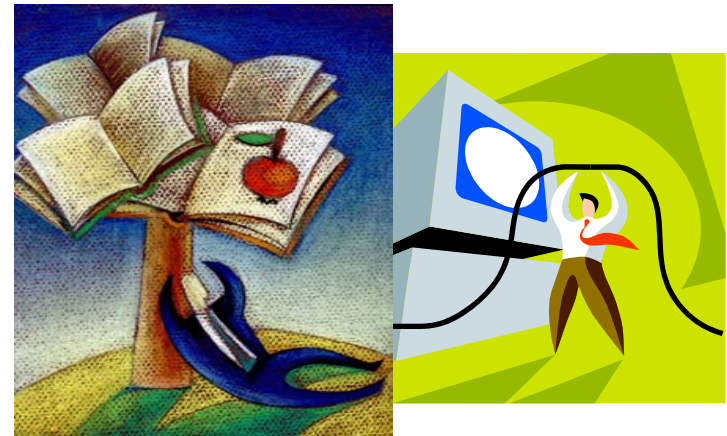
### Challenges\*\*

- Distance communication produced delays in work completion

\*\*The success of this initiative is mainly due to the fact that this project does not need articulation agreements in order to be delivered.

### Pending Agenda

- Establish strategies to encourage the creation of more learning objects to nurture students' resources
- Involve more member institutions to share and place their online learning objects in the repository





# Steps that were Required

**Funding Support  
e-Mentoring**

**Marketing and seeking funds**

**Building Alliances With Corporations  
and Professional Organizations**

**Finding Solutions for Pricing and Enrollment**

**Writing Memoranda of Understandings**

**Developing Policy Agreements**

**Building Cross-Institutional Teams**





# Characteristics of HETS Collaborative Initiatives

- ❖ Face to face meetings
- ❖ Commitment to each other as well as the project
- ❖ Spirit of cooperation
- ❖ Virtual team building and communication
- ❖ Willingness to work above contractual commitment
- ❖ Experienced educators and administrators
- ❖ Institutional and HETS support





# Greatest Challenges



- ❖ Numbers of institutions participating
- ❖ Turn over in faculty members participating
- ❖ Distance in itself
- ❖ Competing time commitments
- ❖ Funding and contractual agreements



# Inter-institutional Challenges

## Public vs. Private institutions

- ❖ Student Readiness and access issues
  - Assessment and Placement of Students
  - Language Proficiency
  - Online computer proficiency
- ❖ Registration of students
  - Tuition- Need for common tuition structure
  - Calendar
- ❖ Delivery of online courses
  - Access to compatible electronic platform
  - Credit transfer
- ❖ Faculty issues
  - Incentives
  - Union contracts
  - Workload issues



# Related Accomplishments

- ❖ Networked faculty, leaders, staff, professionals, and students
- ❖ HETS moved from a Type 1 to a Type 3 Consortium
- ❖ Enhanced relationships with corporate, non-profit, and funding organizations
- ❖ Raised level of awareness and support for collaborative distance learning within institutional leadership
- ❖ Increased HETS visibility and credibility
- ❖ Pushed institutions with online experience to new levels of cross-institutional collaboration



# Major Challenges HETS faced

- ❖ Several autonomous complex programs
- ❖ Complex implementation, management, and technical scopes
- ❖ Web technology advancements
- ❖ Many institutional policy barriers to overcome
- ❖ Great reliance on volunteer work from faculty and staff
- ❖ HETS had to double its efforts to improve regional and local participation of members
- ❖ Limited human resources
- ❖ Nature of the Consortium (varied institutions)
- ❖ Broad project expectations



# Lessons Learned (A)

- ❖ Perform assessment before establishing project goals
- ❖ Project was too broad and complicated to be directed and implemented by a small office with few resources
- ❖ Development of online resources for faculty and students is a simpler and more viable way than developing online shared programs (i.e. success of Project HOLA)
- ❖ It is vital to have campus coordinators committed to the collaboration projects
- ❖ Need to structure several outcomes of income and funding resources

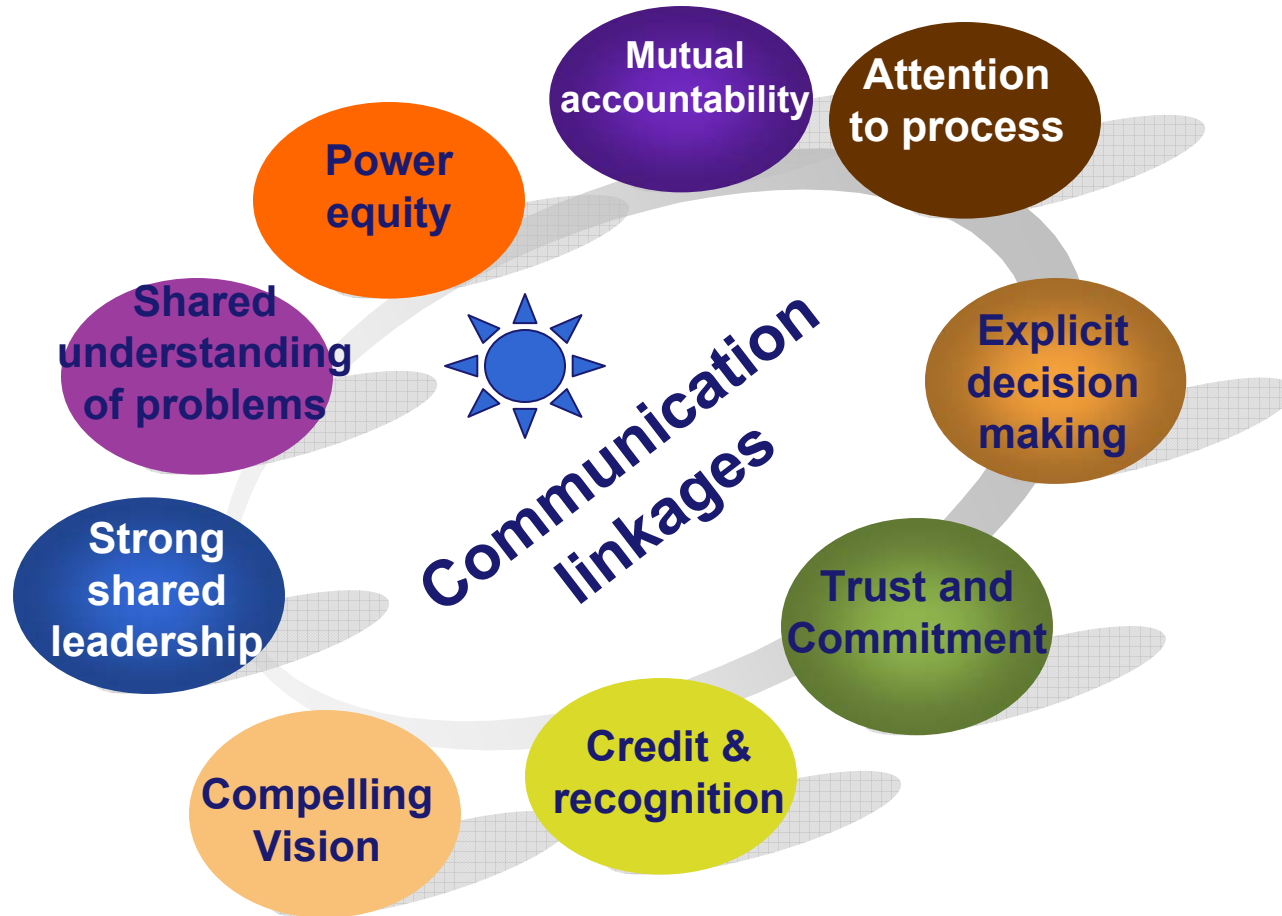


# Lessons Learned (B)

- ❖ Establish administrative and policy agreements for online shared programs before hand
- ❖ Involve all key members in the process
- ❖ Designate campus coordinators for the online programs
- ❖ Pay continuous attention to the collaboration process
- ❖ Insure and support constant communication
- ❖ Anticipate economic viability of your participating institutions for program delivery
- ❖ Involve more faculty to deliver more sessions (responding to demand)



# Collaboration Principles





**¡Gracias! Thank you!**

**Questions and Comments**





# Guidelines for Effective Collaboration

- ❖ Involving key players
- ❖ Ensuring that collaborative leadership is visionary, willing to take risks
- ❖ Establishing a shared vision
- ❖ Building ownership at all levels
- ❖ Establishing communication and decision-making processes
- ❖ Institutionalizing change



# Characteristics of true partnerships

- ❖ Shared authority
- ❖ Joint investment of resources and reputation
- ❖ Development of a new structure
- ❖ Comprehensive planning
- ❖ Detailed communication strategies
- ❖ Distribution of power
- ❖ Shared liability, risk taking, accountability and rewards