Distance Education in Natural Resources: A National Study of Inhibitors and Motivators for Participation in Distance Education Programs

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“formal education process in which the student and instructor are not in the same place” (Parasad & Lewis, 2008, p.1)

Early beneficiaries:
- Physical disabilities
- Women
- Working individuals
- Remote regions
History of Distance Education

- Biblical, St. Paul
  - Correspondence
- *Boston Gazette*, 1728
- University of Chicago, 1892
- Chautauqua Correspondence College, 1900
- Distance teaching universities, 1970
  - 26 countries
  - University of Maryland University College
  - Penn State University
Land–Grant Institutions

- Morrill Act of 1862
- First Correspondence Courses, 1892
  - Penn State University
  - University of Wisconsin
Natural Resources and Distance Learning: Where We Stand

- Distance education programs/course growth
  - 4.6 million – Fall 2008 up from 1.6 million – Fall 2002 (Allen & Seaman, 2009)
  - Institutions with over 15,000 students
  - Primarily doctoral/research based

- Natural resource programs slow to make offerings

- He (2004)
  - 4.5 % of institutions offering programs/courses in natural resources
Purpose: If distance education participation is growing, why is the natural resource discipline less represented

Survey 50+ institutions offering natural resource degree programs
Participation in distance education
  ◦ Survey of Inhibitors and Motivators
    ▪ Administrators
    ▪ Faculty
    ▪ Students
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He, X. (2004). *Natural resources distance learning programs in the United States and China.* (Unpublished master’s thesis). Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA.


