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**DISTANCE LEARNING LEADERS ADDRESS
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IQAT Benchmarking Presentation at e-Learning 2007 Acknowledges Shift in Higher Education

SYRACUSE, N.Y. -February 16, 2007- Higher education institutions are looking for new ways to meet the changing demands of their students and the governing bodies that create education policies – the distance learning community is no exception.

Acknowledging this change and advocating for better accountability, Pamela Quinn, President of the Dallas County Community College District's R. Jan LeCroy Center for Educational Telecommunications, Richard T. Hezel, Ph.D., President of Hezel Associates, and Josh Mitchell, Manager of Strategic Services at Hezel Associates will give a presentation entitled Benchmarking for Quality in Distance Learning at the annual distance learning conference, e-Learning 2007, on Sunday, Feb. 18 at 11:15 a.m.

Increasingly, leaders of the distance learning community are utilizing benchmarking to improve the accountability of their programs. The presentation centers around the key theme of accountability from Secretary Spellings' Commission on the Future of Higher Education and the benchmarking tool for distance learning, IQAT (eye•cat). IQAT is an online tool aimed at distance learning programs to help administrators measure and manage change over time compared with other, similar institutions.

Continuous benchmarking helps reveal standards and best practices an institution can use to improve its performance and alignment. IQAT provides the ability for a growing group of people from a range of distance learning programs to benchmark against one other. These distance learning leaders, Charter Members of IQAT, are afforded an opportunity for greater visibility as benchmarking visionaries and a chance to collaborate with peers via virtual discussions, in addition to other benefits.

Attendees of the Benchmarking presentation will be invited to join IQAT and become Charter Members.

At the presentation, Quinn will address the issues of student performance accountability in the workforce and what aggregation and disaggregation on campuses means for the campus community. Hezel will discuss the link between benchmarking and accountability. Mitchell will approach the various ways in which benchmarking can contribute to an institution's distance learning management and performance, and how IQAT can assist in the process. The conference, attended by many distance learning practitioners and administrators, is scheduled for February 17-20 in Albuquerque, N.M. For more information about IQAT and the Charter Membership, visit www.iqat.org.

ABOUT HEZEL ASSOCIATES

Headquartered in Syracuse, N.Y., Hezel Associates is the nationally recognized consulting firm for customized education research. The firm has earned a distinguished reputation as a leading expert in distance education research, positioning strategy and instructional delivery. The U.S. Department of Education, Habitat for Humanity International, the Arizona Board of Regents and Regis University rely on Hezel Associates' strategic recommendations to inform decisions and to guide policy development. Dr. Richard T. Hezel, a leading research-oriented education consultant, founded the company in 1987. For further information about Hezel Associates, visit www.hezel.com.

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