FGDLA

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DISTANCE LEARNING ASSOCIATION

2021 Annual Awards Ceremony Program

Celebrating the Association's 26th Anniversary recognizing excellence in distance learning

About the FGDLA

Vision
To be the premier professional Association supporting distance learning in the Federal Government.

Purpose
The purpose of the Association is to promote the development and application of distance learning (DL) for education and training, primarily within the federal sector.

Goals
- Facilitate the exchange of information regarding the current application of and potential further uses for DL in the Federal Government.
- Guide the appropriate application of DL in the Federal Government through the sharing of best-practices, and fostering research in DL theory & practice.
- Develop opportunities for the Federal Government in partnering with industry and academia.
- Lead efforts to promote federal interagency cooperation and collaboration.
- Advocate the use of DL for training and education within the Federal Government, and provide recognition of outstanding achievements.

History of the FGDLA
The FGDLA has a long and rich history with its roots originating at the 1993 TeleCon Conference and the parent organization, the United States Distance Learning Association, which granted the FGDLA charter in 1995. For the past two decades, the FGDLA has been a leading advocate of distance learning in the Federal Government.

Officers & Board of Directors
- President: Alex Autry, (Ret., USAF)
- Executive Director: Dr. Jolly Holden, (Ret., USAF)
- Chairman, Board of Directors: Dr. Philip J.-L. Westfall, (Ret., USAF)
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Organizational Awards
Innovation Award

In recognition of an organization for demonstrating excellence in the innovative use of technology in the development and delivery of distance learning in the Federal Government.

National Highway Institute, Federal Highway Administration

The NHI has developed new products and/or services supporting emerging technologies in support of distance learning in the Federal Government. One of the specific innovative developments is the eBook. The Federal Highway Administration/National Highway Institute developed and issued its first eBook Training. The Probabilistic Risk-Based Estimating for Highway Project Cost and Schedule course was developed so that State Department of Transportation can create reliability-based estimates for planned highway projects.

As an NHI first, this eBook training was designed to be both interactive and independent. It was built as an interactive PDF, with expandable graphics, check-in questions that provide feedback, job-related questions, terminology popups, and a case study embedded throughout the training. Learners can take notes and answer questions directly in the PDF. At the end of the course, participants will earn 1.0 continuing education credit

The National Highway Institute's integration of an interactive and engaging eBook supporting the Probabilistic Risk-Based Estimating for Highway Project Cost and Schedule course exemplify the innovative use of technology in supporting distance learning in the Federal Government. Congratulations on receiving the Innovation Award.

National Highway Institute, Federal Highway Administration

More than 200,000 highway-rail grade crossings exist across the United States, over half of which are under the jurisdiction of a public authority. To keep these crossings safe for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians, FHWA offers funds for the elimination of hazards at public highway-rail grade crossings through the Railway-Highway Crossings Program. This course helps planners, engineers, and other practitioners responsible for the design, construction, or maintenance of highway-rail crossings navigate the planning and funding process and maximize the safety impact of their rail projects.

This training combines independent, self-paced elements with interactive learning opportunities with peers and expert instructors. In an efficient and effective way, this MOOC-like format allows participants to fit the training into their schedule while also benefiting from the experience of other industry professionals. Learners will have opportunities to discover local area examples (rural crossings, metropolitan crossings, or both) by working through focused application assignments. This innovative, learner-focused format expands the depth of material that participants can study and maintains opportunities for engagement, both with the virtual instructor and with industry peers,

while allowing participants to work at their own pace. At the end of the 12-week course, participants who pass the final exam with a 70% or more will earn 1.6 continuing education credits.

The National Highway Institute's new training course, *WHERE HIGHWAYS MEET RAILS: CROSSING,* exemplifies the innovative use of technology in supporting distance learning in the Federal Government. Congratulations on receiving the Innovation Award.

United Nations International School

The United Nations is an intergovernmental organization aiming to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, achieve international cooperation, and be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations. Under the auspices of the United Nations and guided by its ideals, UNIS provides a rigorous international program in an inclusive and diverse learning environment focused on academic excellence. UNIS fosters innovation, creativity and cross-cultural communication, educating and inspiring its students to become an active force in shaping a better world: peaceful, compassionate and sustainable.

UNIS currently utilizes innovative collaboration technology (virtual and on-campus learning) for all curriculum with 155 Zoom Rooms, Meetings, Webinars with capacity of 1,000 attendees or participants. The design of rooms, device management and ease-of-use creates comfort and confidence with users and students. Breakout rooms, polling, sharing screen, spotlighting, pinning, annotation, whiteboarding are features utilized on regular basis.

The United Nations International School's continued efforts and enthusiastic support of distance learning in the Federal Government exemplify the spirit of the Federal Government Distance Learning Association. Congratulations on receiving the Innovation Award.

Defense Language Institution English Language Center, Air Education and Training Command

The DLIELC uses Zoom and has 266 primary users with unlimited growth and scale potential over geographically dispersed and deployed commands. Students have transitioned to a digital learning environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, all of DLIELC's academic instruction was conducted in a classroom setting using printed books. During this time, nearly all of DLIELC's instructors are working remotely. Despite the required teleworking, instructors continue to execute the entirety of the instructional mission by using innovation and technology.

The DLIELC distance learning utilizes various technologies and software, such as Zoom, Schoology, Google Classroom, Quizziz, WhatsApp, Facebook and other resources to keep the schoolhouse operating. What would have taken two years in a traditional scenario, was accomplished in just two weeks. The newly implemented DLIELC distance learning program serves as an example of successful teamwork and dedication to the Air Force mission.

The Defense Language Institution English Language Center's continued efforts and enthusiastic support of distance learning in the Federal Government exemplify the spirit of

the Federal Government Distance Learning Association. Congratulations on receiving the Innovation Award.

Five Star Award

In recognition of an organization for demonstrating excellence in providing enterprise wide distance learning solutions for the Federal Government.

Peace Corps

The Peace Corps' LearningSpace (the Peace Corps' learning management system) Course Developer Certificate program launched in July, 2020 in the midst of the COVID crisis. As cohorts complete the program, those who do exceptionally well are nominated to be mentors for future cohorts where they are able to continue to build their skills "teaching is learning" This enables the agency to build a decentralized cadre of expert staff and develop an ongoing community of practice. To date, over 800 Peace Corps staff members from 56 countries have graduated from the program and have created more than 200 new courses for use by both Volunteers and Staff. This has been a transformative effort for the agency as it up-skills to meet the 'new normal' in a COVID environment and adds to the Agency's capacity to deliver blended learning through the use of technology.

The Peace Corp's continued efforts and enthusiastic support of distance learning in the Federal Government exemplify the spirit of the Federal Government Distance Learning Association. Congratulations on receiving the prestigious Five-Star Award.

Training and Evaluation Branch, Federal Aviation Administration Academy

The Training and Evaluation Branch provides traditional brick-n-mortar instructor qualification training for all FAA Academy instructors, field instructors, international instructors, adjuncts and instructors from other government agencies. Before the Pandemic, most training organizations did not embrace virtual training as a sustained, viable training platform, which then propelled the FAA Academy to embrace a distance learning option.

As a result, a team of instructional systems specialists quickly developed a contingency plan to train all FAA instructors on how to use electronic delivery technology in early March of 2020. While utilizing Zoom, Huddle and Skype software to collaborate between team members and to create engaging and effective virtual

training content from scratch, this team miraculously delivered the first virtual series of workshops by March 31, 2020.

By August 2021, the team sourced over 150 virtual training classes and workshops to nearly 1,500 FAA Academy, field employees and outside agencies. By innovating workshops and courses based on virtual training best practices and industry standards, the team allowed the FAA to maintain training activities during the COVID-19 pandemic and realize the inherit benefits of virtual training even after the crisis.

The FAA Academy's *Training and Evaluation Branch* continued efforts and enthusiastic support of distance learning in the Federal Government exemplify the spirit of the Federal Government Distance Learning Association. Congratulations on receiving the prestigious Five-Star Award.

Federal Protective Service, Department of Homeland Security

Three years ago, the Federal Protective Service (FPS) recognized the need to create a division for distance learning and multimedia. The organization had been lightly involved in distance learning since 2009 but never proceeded to dedicate the time and resources to this endeavor.

However, due to the COVID pandemic, the agency created a Distance Learning Multimedia team in responding to the pressing need to remotely train law enforcement personnel. The result was the implementation of a hybrid distance learning solution.

The outcome of implementing that strategy resulted in training over 7000 federal law enforcement officers via virtual classrooms in a year. This solution would not have been realized if not for the foresight of the Federal Protective Service in creating, funding, and staffing a Distance Learning and Multimedia Branch. The FPS has demonstrated excellence in providing enterprise-wide distance learning solutions to the Federal Government proving that the Federal Protective Service is the little agency that CAN, when it comes to leadership and distance learning.

The Department of Homeland Security Federal Protective Service's continued efforts and enthusiastic support of distance learning in the Federal Government exemplify the spirit of the Federal Government Distance Learning Association. Congratulations on receiving the prestigious Five-Star Award.

Individual Awards

Pioneer Award

In recognition of an individual for demonstrating initiative and leadership in the development and implementation of distance learning in the Federal Government.

Kelly L. Barrett,

Self-Help Online Tutorials (SHOTs) Program Director, Internal Revenue Service

Kelly Barrett has worked for the IRS for over 22 years and has over 12 years of training project management experience with an expertise in distance, eLearning course development and MicroLearning Videos, and is a certified Instructional Designer (ISD) and Online Training Professional (COTP). Eight years ago Kelly began researching the effectiveness of MicroLearning Videos and how they can increase retention of training and provide immediate on-demand support for all IRS employees. He then developed and implemented the Self-Help Online Tutorials (SHOTs) initiative, which has grown into an enterprise-wide initiative with over 600 SHOTs videos for all 84,000+ IRS employees. Kelly's continued efforts, professionalism, and enthusiastic integration of distance learning supporting the IRS embody the spirit of the Federal Government Distance Association Congratulations on being presented with the Pioneer Award.

Peter Bergh,

LMS Administrator, Office of Staff Learning & Development, Peace Corps

In only three years, under the leadership and expert design and guidance of Peter, the Peace Corps LMS LearningSpace has become an integral part of how the Peace Corps supports global operations in 61 countries. In addition to outstanding customer service day and night to global customers, Peter has created and facilitated an eight week project-based course, the LearningSpace Course Developer Certificate program. The course offered four times in 2020 and 2021, supported 835 Peace Corps global staff to create an impressive 250 Volunteer and Staff learning projects. Peter's outstanding contributions have had a strategic and long-lasting impact on the Agency's ability to deliver training in a blended format and accelerate volunteer preparedness to serve the Peace Corps Mission. His continued efforts, professionalism,

and enthusiastic integration of distance learning supporting Peace embody the spirit of the Federal Government Distance Association. Congratulations on being presented with the Pioneer Award.

Pillar Award

In recognition for exceptional service and dedication in supporting distance learning in Federal Government and the Federal Government Distance Learning Association.

Kris Ptak,
Chair, Communications Committee, FGDLA

Over the past several months, Kris has singlehandedly designed a new FGDLA website, migrated dozens of web pages to the new website, as well as integrating 508 Compliance tools. During this time, Kris also created a marketing and email campaign using Constant Contact which reduced annual costs to the Association.

Kris continued efforts, professionalism, and enthusiasm embody the spirit of the Federal Government Distance Learning Association. Congratulations on being presented with the Pillar Award.

Special Recognition Award

In recognition of an individual whose exceptional service in developing and supporting distance learning technologies for the Federal Government.

Clay Middlebrook
Director, Defense Education & Training Network, Dept. of the Air Force

Clay designed & installed 13 Interactive Television studios for Defense Education & Training Network over the past 6 years that greatly expanding medical training for all three military services along with the AF community, college staff training through interactive ITV. His innovative design and construction of the DETN helped the DOD save tens of millions of dollars in cost-avoidance training.

Clay's continued efforts, professionalism, and enthusiastic integration of distance learning supporting the Defense Education & Training Network embody the spirit of the Federal Government Distance Association.

Hall of Fame

In recognition of an individual who has made significant contributions in promoting and developing distance learning supporting the Federal Government.

Thomas S. Elliott,
Train-the-Trainer Program Manager, National Highway Institute

Thomas S. Elliott has over 25 years of experience working in a professional development/training environment with an expertise and in-depth awareness for Adult Learning in both face to face and e-learning delivery methods. Tom has been involved in all aspects of developing, validating, management/implementation of training programs utilizing distance learning technologies in Federal Government. He has demonstrated, exceptional leadership leading instructional designers' staff to design innovative and engaging distance learning formats to include asynchronous, synchronous, hybrid, videos, virtual reality, micro learning, and flip learning to transfer knowledge to learners the best way possible.

Thomas' continued efforts and enthusiastic support of distance learning for the Federal Government at the National Highway Institute exemplifies the spirit of the Federal Government Distance Learning Association. Congratulations on being inducted in the 2021 FGDLA Hall of Fame class.

Richard Schrum,
Train-the-Trainer Program Manager, Training and Evaluation Branch, Federal Aviation Administration Academy

From 1992 to 2021, During the past 19 years, Rich served as the Operations Manager of the FAA Academy's Virtual Training Network (AVTN). Rich single-handedly manages this program at an annual cost of $380K that includes reconnections of circuits and hardware maintenance. He provided leadership and consultative services to the Academy subject matter experts (SME) in the utilization of instructional systems design principles and methodologies in virtual environments. Rich has always been an advocate for distance learning.

Early on, he served as a lead for ISD teams, composed of SMEs, education specialists, and contract personnel responsible for developing and converting Academy resident training courses for delivery via distance learning. He researched, planned, coordinated, directed course development/conversion activities associated with distance learning via the AVTN.

These noteworthy accomplishments reflects great credit upon Rich and on the FAA Academy. His continued efforts and enthusiastic support of distance learning for the FAA Academy exemplifies the spirit of the Federal Government Distance Learning Association. Congratulations on being inducted to the 2021 FGDLA Hall of Fame class.

Dr. Carla Lane,
Executive Director of The Education Coalition; Professor, Education Dept., Capella University, and Vice-President, Higher Education, FGDLA

Dr. Lane is recognized as a leading authority on distance education and teleconferencing. She has 30 plus years exclusively in the field of distance education and online learning through her professional experiences, research, evaluations and publications. Her work has been published in many research reports and journals and she was the co-author of three textbooks that were used by 64 universities.

Her seminal book, *Guide to Teleconferencing and Distance Learning,* which she co-authored in 1997 and encompassed 400+ pages, quickly became the benchmark book on the emerging field of distance learning.

Dr. Lane is listed in *Who's Who in Technology* and was inducted into the USDLA Hall of Fame. She was the original Director of Operations for USDLA and worked to create 20 state chapters, and also served as the Executive Vice President of Applied Business teleCommunications where she was the producer/director of many aspects of the TeleCon and IDLCON conferences.

Carla's career accomplishments in distance learning and her continued efforts and enthusiastic support and contributions to this field exemplifies the spirit of the Federal Government Distance Learning Association. Congratulations on being inducted to the 2021 FGDLA Hall of Fame class.