

3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL

# *Presidents' Forum*

OF EXCELSIOR COLLEGE

*A dialogue among leaders in higher education  
to move from policy to practice  
in an online learning environment.*

## *Schedule of Events*

March 28, 2006

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.



**Offices of WilmerHale**

1899 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, 11th Floor, Washington, DC



## *Welcome to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Presidents' Forum*

JOHN F. EBERSOLE  
PRESIDENT  
EXCELSIOR COLLEGE

In April 2004, the first *Presidents' Forum of Excelsior College* was launched in consultation with the American Council on Education and other higher education organizations. This conference established a dialogue among leaders in higher education and advanced the recognition of innovative practices in online learning.

Last March, the *Forum* formulated specific recommendations for inclusion in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, including proposals to reduce the work penalty and increase the income protection allowance for determining student aid eligibility, extending loan eligibility to less than half-time students, and simplifying the application for federal student aid (FAFSA).

The focus of this session will be to identify **regulatory changes necessary for distance education providers to conduct educational commerce in a knowledge-based economy**. As technology has removed barriers of geography and time, state and federal regulatory practices have not kept pace. Given the increasing attention of regulators and accrediting bodies to distance and online learning, the 2006 session of the *Presidents' Forum* will focus on our common needs for regulatory relief to enhance access and to serve students across state and national boundaries. We will also examine the growing need for outcome assessment in online learning and propose a representative coalition of distance learning providers that can help us gain recognition and support from policy makers.

A summary report of the outcomes will be disseminated to interested institutions and stakeholders in the field of online learning through the *Forum* Web site at <http://presidentsforum.excelsior.edu> to share information, encourage appropriate change, and shape the focus of the *Forum's* continuing work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John F. Ebersole". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John F. Ebersole  
President



# *Keynote Speaker*

DR. PETER STOKES  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
EDUVENTURES



## *Entering the Age of Brands:*

### Growing Online Higher Education Enrollments in a Maturing Market

This brief overview of trends in online higher education examines consumer and employer preferences with respect to the online delivery of education and training as well as the opportunities and challenges facing institutions seeking to grow online enrollments in an increasingly competitive marketplace. In addition to reviewing historical growth in online enrollments, the presentation will examine the evolution of consumer and employer perceptions of the quality and attractiveness of online learning. The presentation will also identify how the rising costs of marketing are reshaping the competitive environment and will conclude with a discussion of opportunities to establish a competitive advantage in online markets.

# Roundtable Discussion Topics



DR. JAMES W. HALL  
FORUM FACILITATOR

FORMER CHANCELLOR OF ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY  
PAST PRESIDENT OF SUNY/EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE



DR. JOSEPH MOORE  
PRESIDENT  
SUNY EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

## *Public Perception, Data, and Public Policy:*

### The Invisible Adult Learner

As our workforce becomes more diverse, as the correlation tightens between educational attainment and job opportunity, and as employers seek productivity from every employee, federal and state policies still ignore the needs of adult learners. The failure to support adult learners means that the United States will be unable to increase the educational attainment level of its workforce at the same time it is attempting to grow a knowledge-based economy. The consequences of this disconnect between effective public policy and symbolic public pronouncements will influence postsecondary institutions serving adult learners, employers seeking productive and mature employees, and adults who rely upon further education for career advancement.



DR. DIANA CORDOVA  
DIRECTOR  
CENTER FOR ADVANCEMENT  
OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC EQUITY,  
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

## *Diversity in a Distance Learning Environment:*

### Bridging Institutional Goals and the Student Experience

ACE established the Center for Advancement of Racial and Ethnic Equity (CAREE) in 1981 to address declining rates of minority participation in higher education. The Center monitors and reports on the progress of African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians in postsecondary education and is engaged in efforts to improve their educational and employment opportunities in higher education. CAREE also provides extensive assistance to colleges and universities seeking to improve their recruitment and retention of minority students, faculty, and administrators; it also seeks to identify exemplary programs aimed at improving the campus climate for persons of color and addressing the challenges faced by academe in its efforts to continue to increase participation rates and degree attainment by U.S. ethnic minorities.

As online distance learning becomes more established throughout higher education, we must consider how institutional core values, such as the commitment to maintaining diversity, should be incorporated in the student experience (student services and the curriculum). What strengths do distance learning

providers bring to enhance outreach and to retain diverse populations of students, faculty, and administrators? Can we strengthen the commitment to diversity within a virtual campus community and remove barriers to the participation and success of minority students in higher education? Are there exemplary programs that we should emulate in the online learning environment to facilitate diversity?



MR. JAY URWITZ, ESQ., PARTNER  
WILMER, CUTLER, PICKERING,  
HALE AND DORR LLP



MR. EDWARD TOBIN, ESQ., PARTNER  
WILMER, CUTLER, PICKERING,  
HALE AND DORR LLP

### *State Impediments to Distance Learning and Educational Commerce*

While the federal government is removing impediments to the provision of distance education, the states continue to pose issues, from recognition of credits and degrees to barriers in access to professions. Jay Urwitz, a partner at WilmerHale, who has long experience in federal and state education legislation and regulations, will address those impediments. Ed Tobin, also a partner at WilmerHale and most recently the Executive Director of the Republican Governors' Association, will discuss the impediments and the political dynamics at work in creating and removing them.



DR. MICHAEL J. OFFERMAN  
PRESIDENT  
CAPELLA UNIVERSITY

### *Learning Outcomes Transparency: Leading the Way to Accountability*

E-learning now has the opportunity to demonstrate leadership in assuring increased levels of accountability. Institutions that are heavily engaged in e-learning and/or direct assessment of learning outcomes could join together in a commitment to transparency regarding their actual learning outcomes. What is necessary is a shared framework for the assessment of learning outcomes and transparent reporting of the results of the assessments. A framework would not necessarily mean coming together on what outcomes are shared but that outcomes would be measured and openly reported (we do not have to all be or look the same, but we could commit to and deliver transparency). Such action would engender trust, overcome suspicion, demonstrate the viability of different types of institutions and approaches, empower the consumer, and reassure the financial aid providers.

If the e-learning and outcomes-based institutions would join together, they could lead the way for all of higher education. Do we need additional public policy to make this happen? Could a group of institutions join together to begin work on this idea? What barriers exist to such an undertaking? What infrastructure would be necessary to do this?

# *Presidents' Forum*

TUESDAY – MARCH 28, 2006

1899 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, 11th Floor

## *Schedule of Events*

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8:30 – 9:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast

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9:30 – 12:00 p.m. Presidents Forum —  
Roundtable Discussions

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1. Public Perception, Data, and Public  
Policy: The Invisible Adult Learner  
– Joseph Moore

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2. Diversity in a Distance Learning  
Environment: Bridging Institutional  
Goals and the Student Experience  
– Diana Cordova

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3. State Impediments to  
Distance Learning and  
Educational Commerce  
– Jay Urwitz and Edward Tobin

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4. Learning Outcomes Transparency:  
Leading the Way to Accountability  
– Michael J. Offerman

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12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Buffet Luncheon and  
Keynote Address

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1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Formulating a List of  
Recommendations and  
Strategies to Achieve Change

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3:00 p.m. Adjourn

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*Continue to follow the progress of our discussions  
at the Virtual Presidents' Forum:*

**WWW.  
PRESIDENTSFORUM.  
EXCELSIOR.EDU**

**WWW.PRESIDENTSFORUM.EXCELSIOR.EDU**

For more information regarding the Presidents' Forum of Excelsior College,  
please contact the Office of the President.

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