

August 4, 1998

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Presidents

**FROM:** Brenda H. Rogers  
Vice President for Administration

**SUBJECT:** Real Education

I understand that Jim Aiken of Real Education has written some or all of you about what Real Education has to offer in support of online instruction. I further understand that he references me in the letter and states that Real Education will provide the “backbone” for the electronic “college.”

I believe that Jim is making a lot of assumptions and may be overstating what he and I discussed last week. I told him that the recommendation to form a consortium was approved by the Presidents’ Association and that we would be organizing a meeting of those presidents who are interested in participating in the consortium. I did tell him that the proposal from Real Education would be shared with the consortium and that the consortium might want to hear a presentation. I did not discourage him from contacting colleges directly since he was already doing so and the Real Education model is certainly an option.

At this time I would suggest that individual colleges participate in the consortium rather than pursuing the Real Education option. As I have attempted to explain to the staff at Real Education, our funding model, as well as our mission to provide education and training at the “lowest cost possible,” makes it difficult for our system to pay the \$40 per credit hour fee for each student taking a Real Education course. However, the consortium will have to address how to fund the costs associated with training faculty, developing the courseware, delivering the instruction, providing the software for the student and support services required by distance education students, providing and maintaining the hardware and networks, and providing help desk support.

Let me assure you that I am not promoting Real Education and its proposal. I would hope that the consortium could use the information from the Board

Presidents  
August 4, 1998  
Page 2

Reserve project on how other states have organized to deliver online courses. I believe that our community colleges should explore multiple approaches to the “virtual learning community” (the term in the strategic plan). I would certainly encourage hearing from a number of vendors who might provide assistance with implementing a virtual learning community as we explore outsourcing various components of the project. After hearing from the vendors, the consortium may decide to build its own support structure.

The direction the consortium takes will clearly be up to the presidents, or their designees, who choose to join. The consortium will make the decisions, and the System Office staff will serve to facilitate and coordinate activities to support the consortium.

Please call me if you have questions or concerns. I appreciate hearing from you and look forward to providing whatever assistance will be needed by the consortium.

BHR:sh

c: Mr. Jim Aiken, Real Education  
Dr. Barry W. Russell

CC-98-230

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