

Distance Education

NASFAA 1998

US Department of Education

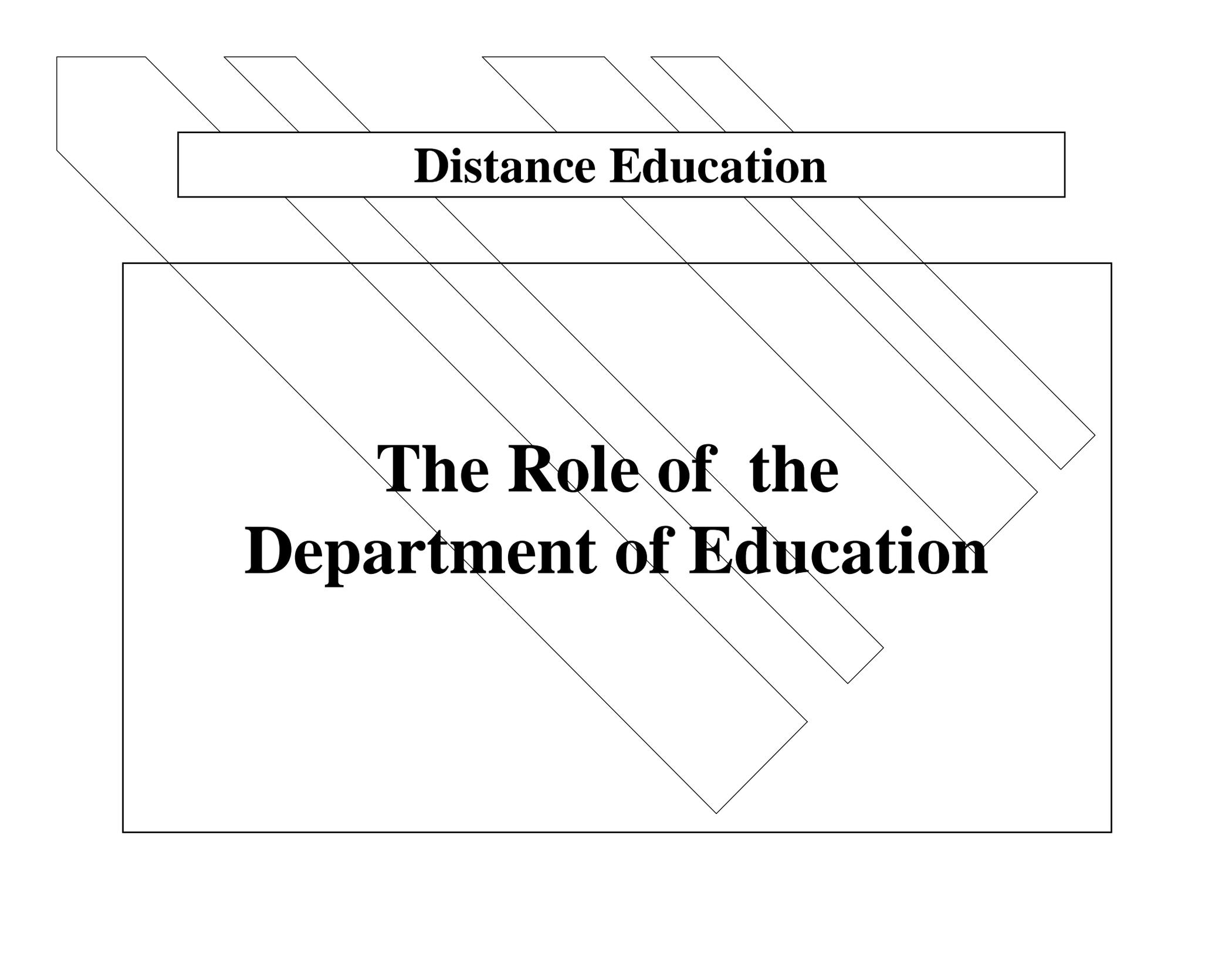
(202) 708-5547 Marianne_Phelps@ed.gov
(202) 708-9900 Cheryl_Leibovitz@ed.gov

Distance Education

What is Distance Education?

Distance Education is a process that connects learners with learning resources. While distance education takes a wide variety of forms, all distance education is characterized by--

- 1. Separation of place and/or time between learners and resources.**
- 2. Interaction between the learner and the instructor and/or the resources is conducted between one or more media; electronic media is not necessarily required.**



Distance Education

The Role of the Department of Education

Distance Education

The Role of the Department of Education

- **Tracking Trends: the NCES Study on the Status Distance Education in the Fall of 1995**
- **Stimulating Innovation: FIPSE**
- **Improving Access to Postsecondary Education**
- **Assuring Quality**

Distance Education

The Role of the Department of Education

(cont.)

- **Protecting the public's investment in student aid**
- **How do you know if you have a student?**
- **How do you know who is taking a test?**
- **If not traditional, how do you know there's sufficient value?**

Distance Education

Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act

ED's Proposal--

- **Eliminated the distinctions among correspondence, home study, and telecommunications courses**
- **Eliminated the 50% requirements for degree granting institutions accredited by an agency with standards in place to evaluate quality of offerings**
- **Authorized the Secretary to adapt aid requirements identified as barriers to distance learning**

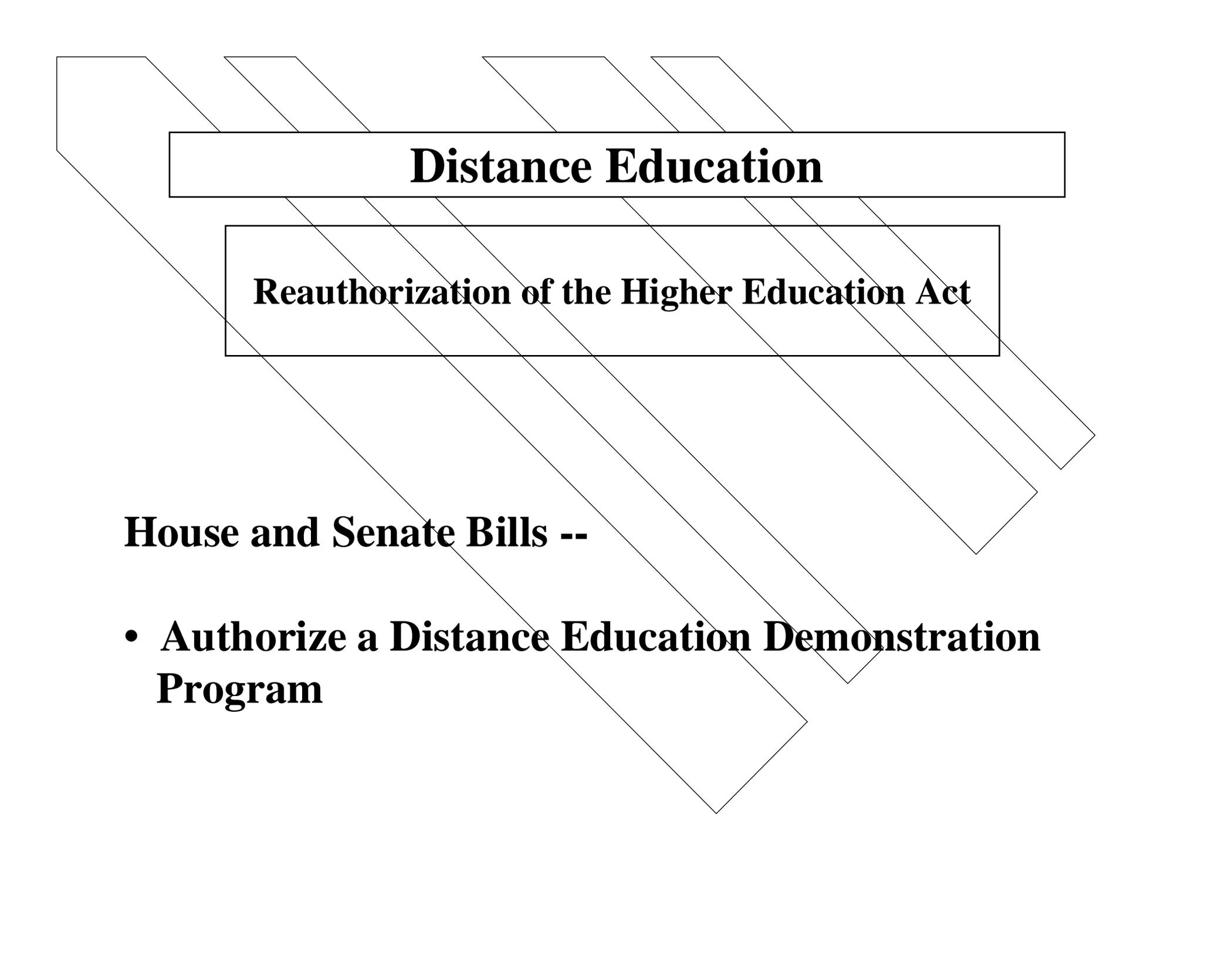
Distance Education

Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act

ED's Proposal (cont.)--

Required accrediting agencies to develop standards to evaluate distance education programs in the following areas:

- **Selection of Students**
- **Methods of Monitoring Student Progress**
- **Academic and Student Support Services**
- **Student Outcomes**



Distance Education

Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act

House and Senate Bills --

- **Authorize a Distance Education Demonstration Program**

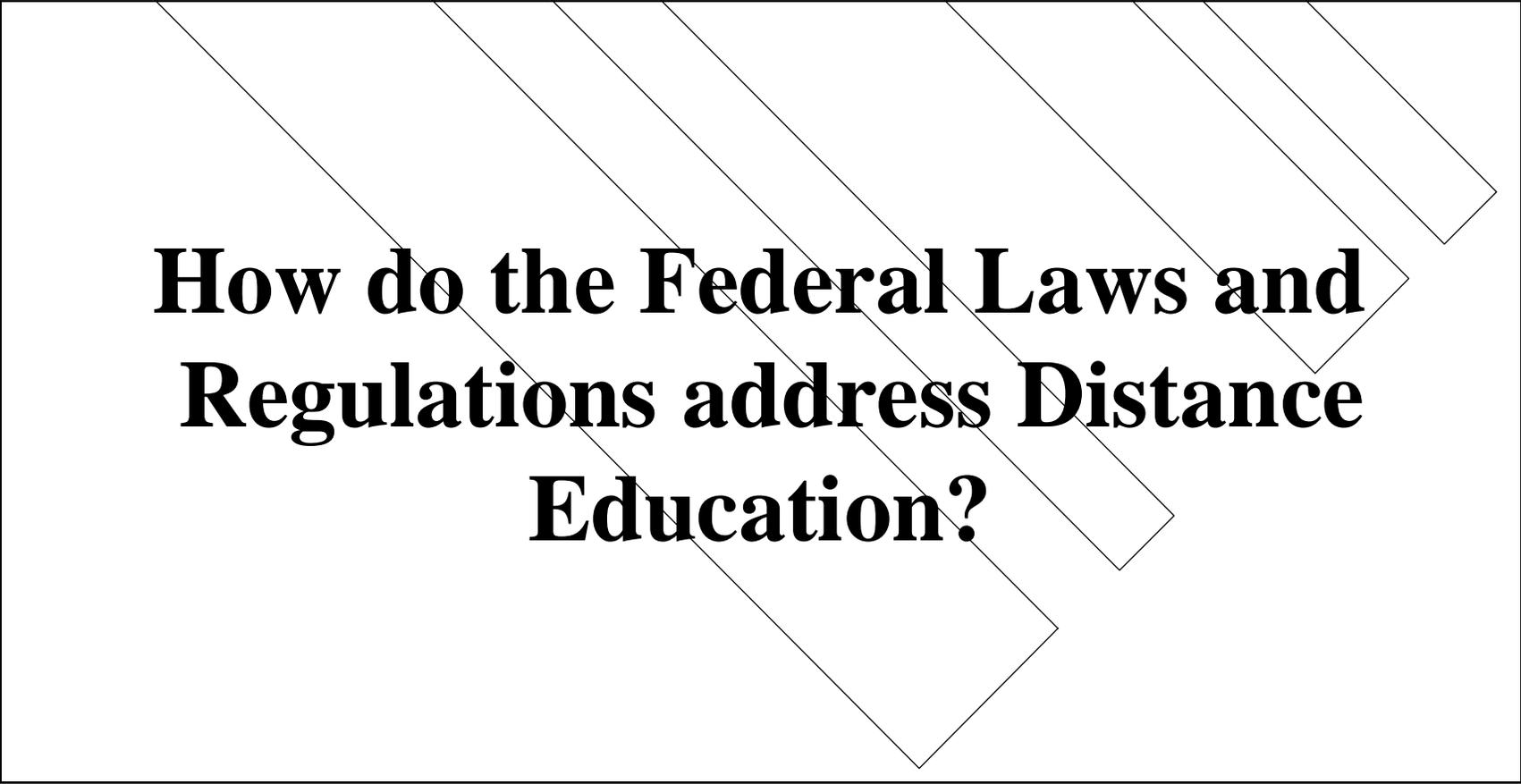
Distance Education

Models of Distance Education

- **Traditional University Designs**
- **Two plus Two Programs: Collaboration between Two and Four Year Schools**
- **Consortiums**
- **Non-traditional Models: Western Governor's University and Others**



Distance Education



**How do the Federal Laws and
Regulations address Distance
Education?**

Distance Education

Statutory and Regulatory Limitations

Definition of Telecommunications

Law-Section 464 (k) Reg- 34 CFR 668.38

The use of television, audio, or computer transmission, including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, computer conferencing, or video cassettes or discs, except that such term does not include a course that is delivered using video cassette or disc recordings at such institution and that is not delivered in person to other students of that institution.

Distance Education

Statutory and Regulatory Limitations

Definition of Correspondence and Telecommunications Law-Section 464 (k) Reg- 34 CFR 600.2 and 668.38

0 A student enrolled in a "telecommunications course" is considered enrolled in a "correspondence course" unless the total number of telecommunication and correspondence courses the institution provides is fewer than 50 percent of the courses the institution provides.

0 If a course is part correspondence and part residential it is considered a correspondence course.

Distance Education

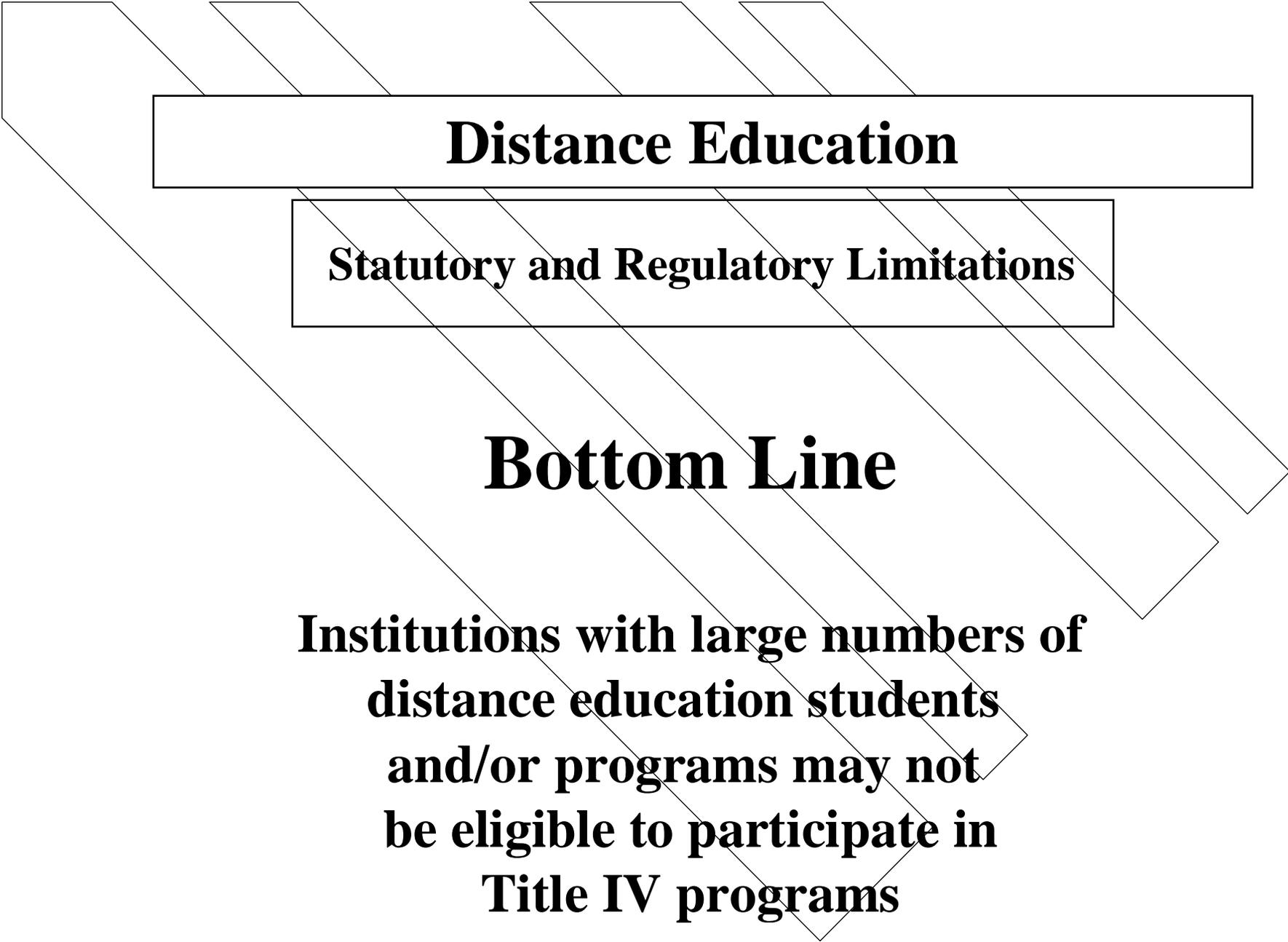
Statutory and Regulatory Limitations

Definition of Eligible Institution

Law -Section 481(a)(3)(A) Reg-34 CFR 600.7

Generally, an educational institution does not qualify as an eligible institution if--

- 1. More than 50 percent of the institution's courses are correspondence courses and /or**
- 2. 50 percent or more of the institution's regular enrolled students are enrolled in correspondence courses.**



Distance Education

Statutory and Regulatory Limitations

Bottom Line

**Institutions with large numbers of
distance education students
and/or programs may not
be eligible to participate in
Title IV programs**

Distance Education

Statutory and Regulatory Limitations

Definition of educational program: Reg-34 CFR 600.2

A program that leads to degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential. However, an institution is not considered to provide an educational program if it does not provide instruction itself, but merely gives credit for instruction provided by another institution(s); examinations; or other accomplishments such as "life experience."

Distance Education

Statutory and Regulatory Limitations

Bottom Line

Programs at institutions offering external degree programs are not eligible unless the institution offers some of the courses applicable to the program itself.

Programs at virtual universities are not eligible unless the institution offers some courses applicable to the program itself.

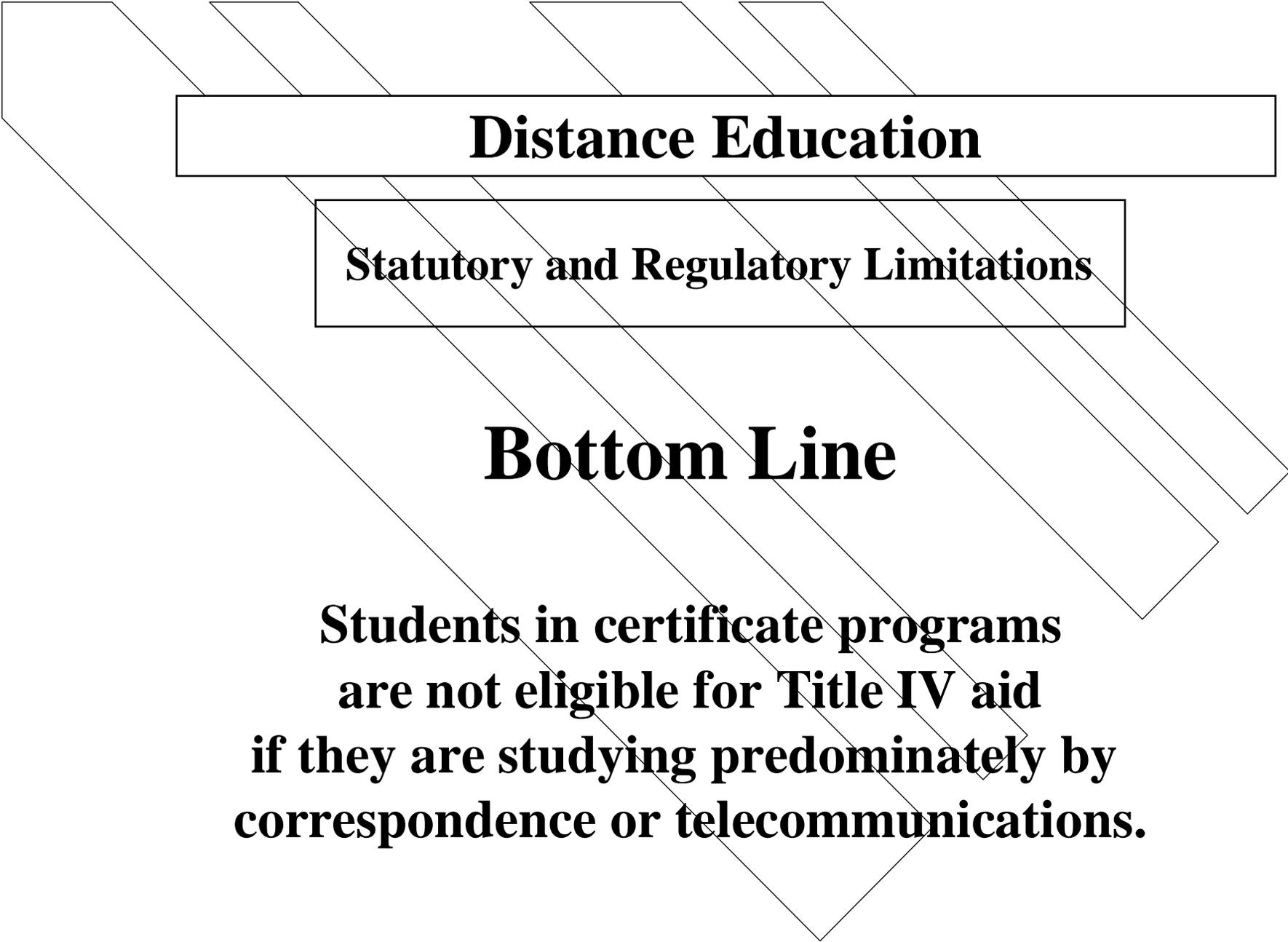
Distance Education

Statutory and Regulatory Limitations

Definition of An Eligible Student

Law-Section 464 (k) Reg- 34 CFR 668.38

A student shall not be eligible to receive Title IV Federal assistance for a correspondence or telecommunications program unless such program leads to an associate, bachelor or graduate degree.



Distance Education

Statutory and Regulatory Limitations

Bottom Line

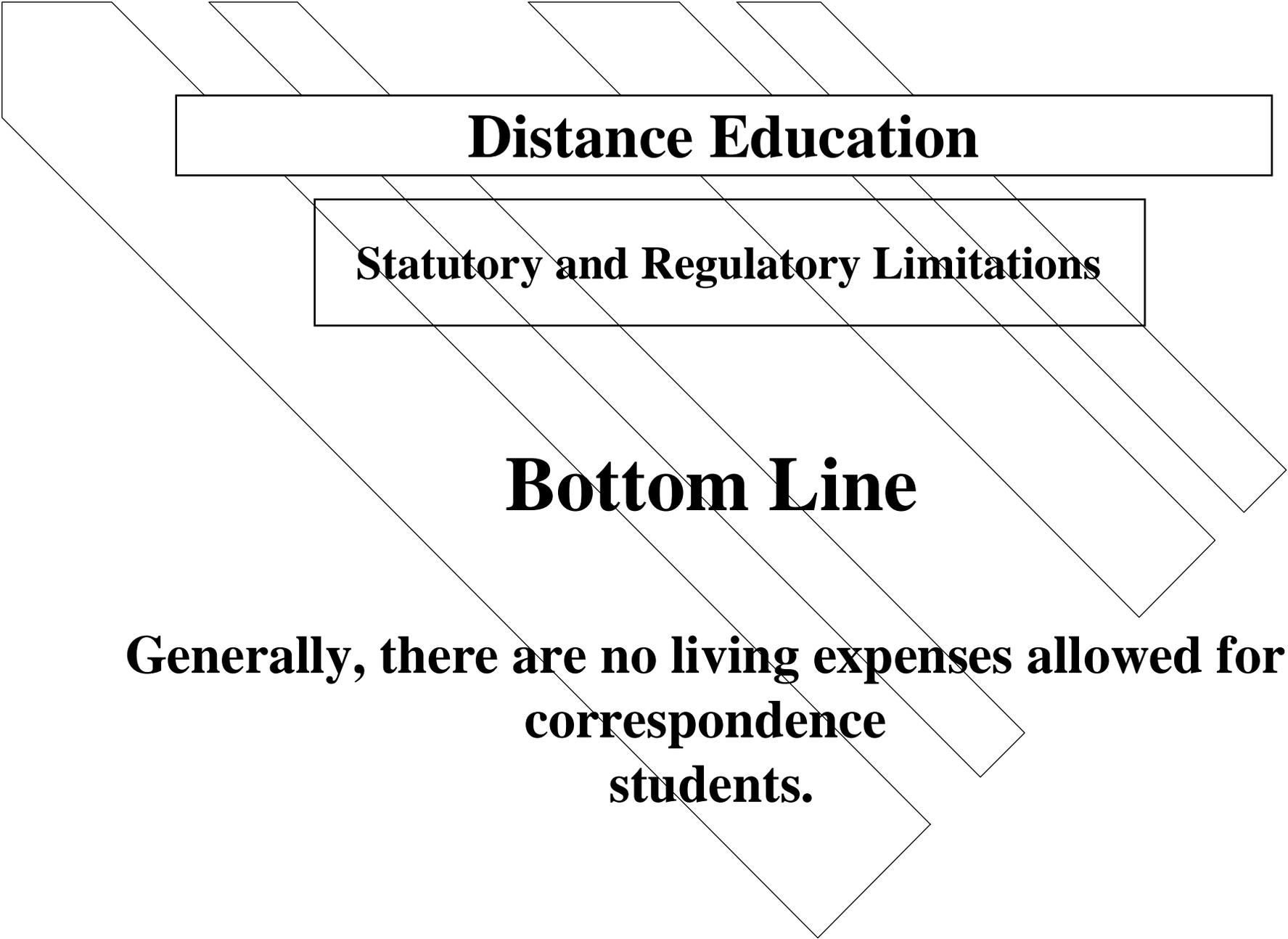
**Students in certificate programs
are not eligible for Title IV aid
if they are studying predominately by
correspondence or telecommunications.**

Distance Education

Statutory and Regulatory Limitations

Cost of Attendance Law-Section 472(5)

For a student engaged in a program of study by correspondence, the student's cost of attendance can include only tuition and fees and, if required, books and supplies, travel, and room and board costs incurred specifically in fulfilling a required period of residential training:



Distance Education

Statutory and Regulatory Limitations

Bottom Line

**Generally, there are no living expenses allowed for
correspondence
students.**

Distance Education

Statutory and Regulatory Limitations

Cost of Attendance Law-Section 472(2)

A student's cost of attendance can include tuition and fees normally assessed a student carrying the same academic workload as determined by the institution, and including costs for rental or purchase of any equipment, materials, or supplies required of all students in the same course of study.

Distance Education

Statutory and Regulatory Limitations

Bottom Line

The cost of equipment, such as a computer, can be included in the cost of attendance of a student studying by correspondence or telecommunication if such equipment is required of all students in the same program.

Distance Education

Statutory and Regulatory Limitations

Student Enrollment Status

Reg-34 CFR 668.2 (def. of full-time student)

Regardless of the number of credits or hours a student is carrying, no student enrolled solely in correspondence study is considered more than a half-time student."

Distance Education

Distance Learning Student Eligibility

An institution may not make a blanket determination that it will refuse to provide Title IV aid to students enrolled in distance education programs or courses. However, an institution may refuse to certify an FFEL application or originate a Direct Loan (or may reduce the amount of the FFEL or Direct Loan) for a student if the decision is made on a case-by-case basis, and the reason (not merely because the student is a distance education student) is provided to the student in writing and documented in the student's file.

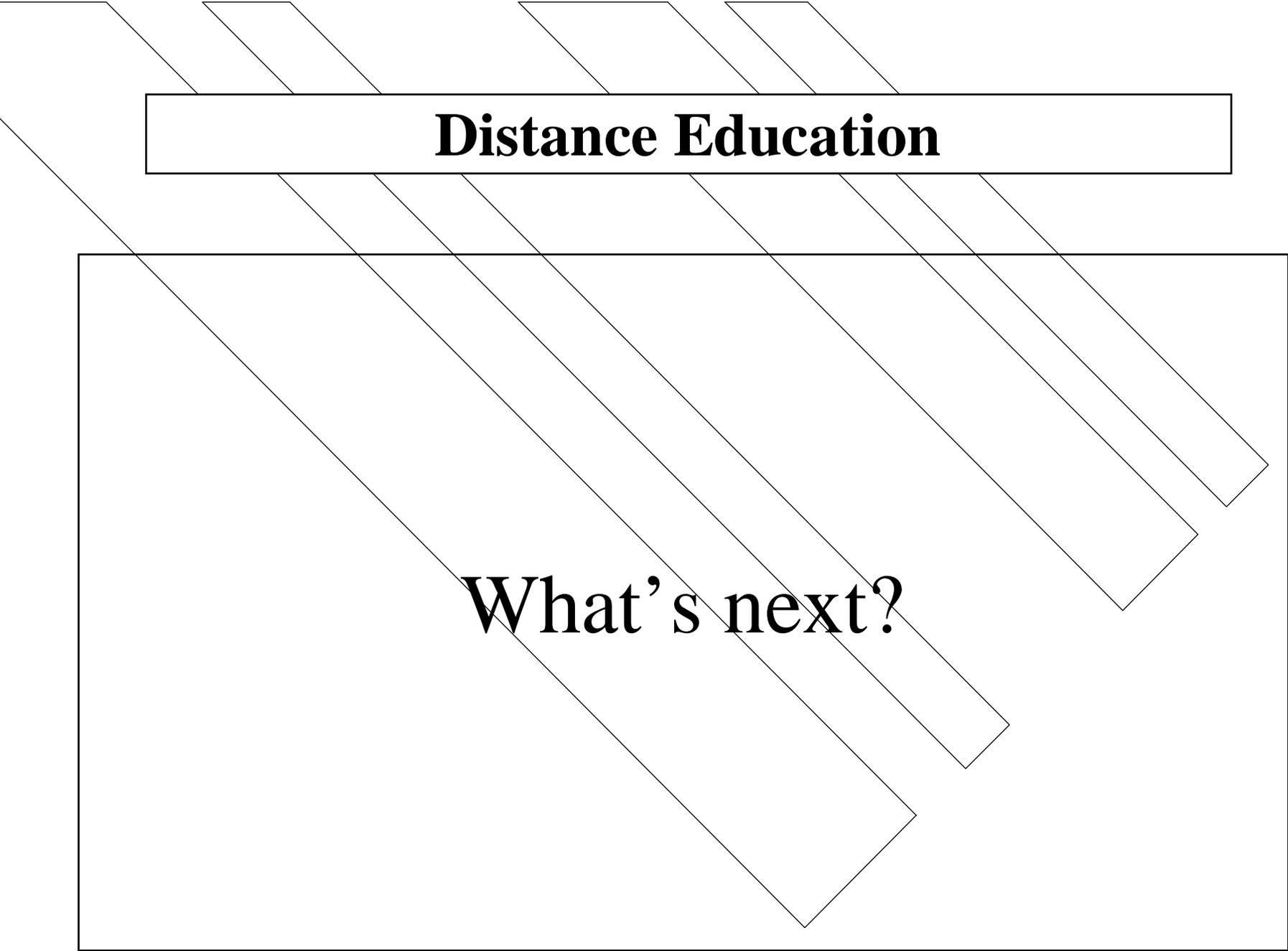
Distance Education

Distance Learning Student Eligibility

Bottom Line

- * Schools cannot refuse aid to someone just because they are taking distance education courses**

- * Schools cannot refuse aid to someone taking courses via the Continuing Education Department if the student is a regular student and the course(s) the student is enrolled in is part is required.**



Distance Education

What's next?

Distance Education

Demonstration Projects

Language is in both the House and Senate bills that provide for a limited number of demonstration projects for distance education programs.

Distance Education

Next Steps for ED's Distance Education Initiative

General Purposes of Demonstration Projects--

- **To allow the Department to test the quality and viability of distance education programs currently restricted under the HEA**
- **To help determine the statutory and regulatory requirements that should be changed to provide greater access to high quality distance education programs**
- **To help determine the appropriate level of student aid for students in distance education program**

Distance Education

Next Steps for ED's Distance Education Initiative

Factors that Could Be Considered in Selecting Schools/Consortiums for a Demonstration Program

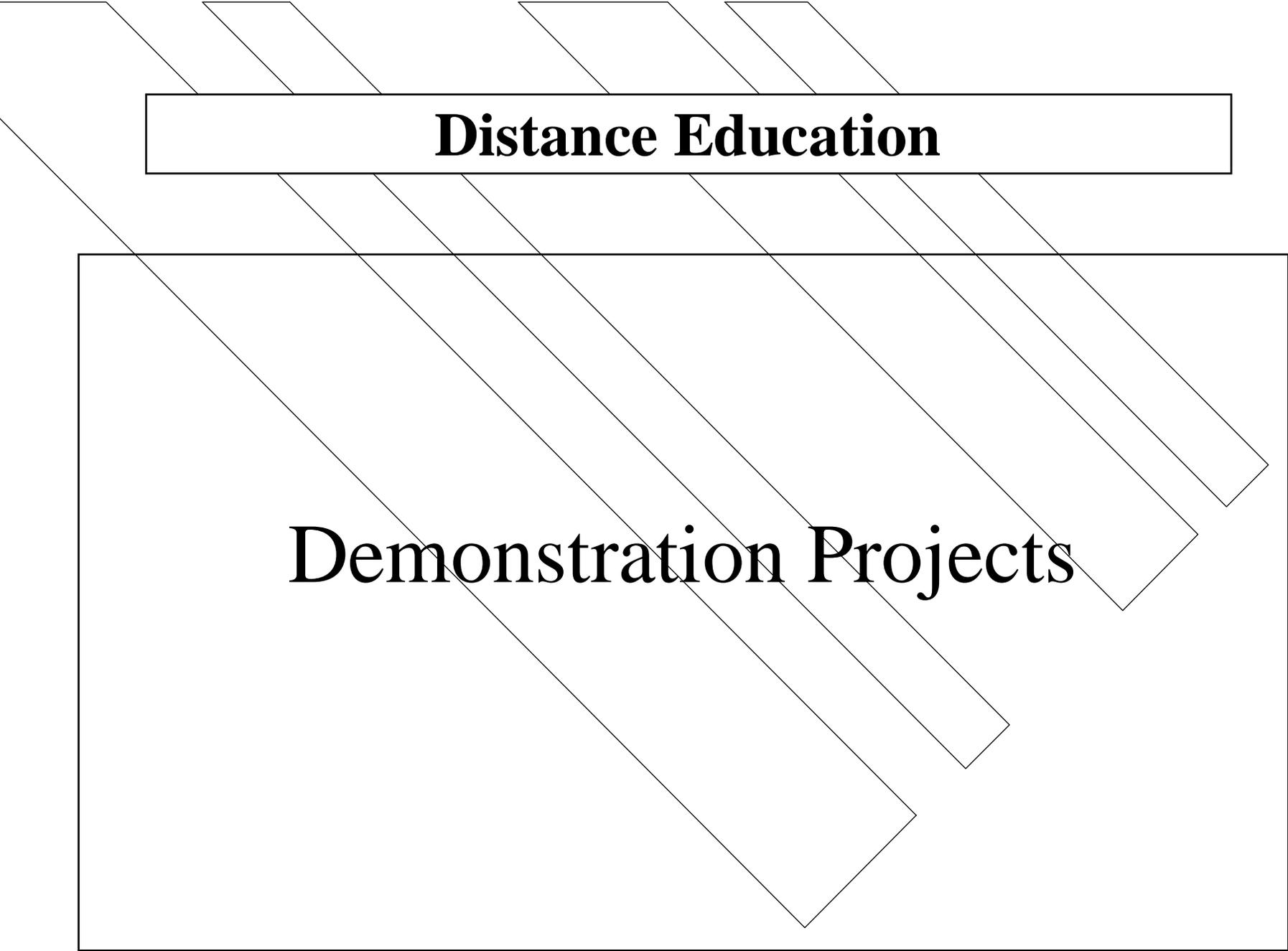
- **Factors Leading to Broad Diversity in the Cohort**
- **Models of Distance Education**
- **Types of Waivers Required**
- **Institutional Types**
- **Geographic Representation**

Distance Education

Next Steps for ED's Distance Education Initiative

Factors that Could Be Considered...(cont.)

- **Plans to Insure Accountability in Administering Program Funds**
- **Willingness to Work Closely with ED Oversight Staff in Implementation**
- **Willingness of the Accrediting Agency and State to Participate in a Program Partnership of the Triad Members**



Distance Education

Demonstration Projects

Distance Education

Demonstration Projects

Subsequent to the enactment of the Reauthorization Act the Department expects to publish a notice in the Federal Register inviting participants to submit proposals to participate in the demonstration projects.

The Department will evaluate the proposals and select participants.

Distance Education

Demonstration Projects

When considering whether or not to waive specific laws or regulations the Department will be looking for institutions to demonstrate how via an alternative plan the intent of the current legislative will be maintained.

Distance Education

Demonstration Projects

Provisions that might be waived or altered under a demonstration project--

- **Definition of an academic year**
- **Definitions of “telecommunications” and “correspondence” courses/programs**
- **12 hour rule (seat time issues)**

Distance Education

Demonstration Projects

Provisions that might be waived or altered ...(cont.)--

- **Determining a disbursement agent**
- **Payment for testing**
- **Credits vs. competencies**

Distance Education

Demonstration Projects

Provisions that might be waived or altered under a demonstration project (cont.)--

- **Special considerations for consortium arrangements**
- **Last day of attendance/ refund issues**
- **Excused absences/ leave of absences**

Distance Education

Demonstration Projects

Other areas that the Department might want to monitor under a demonstration project--

- **Satisfactory progress standards**
- **Ability to Benefit testing procedures**
- **Completion rates**
- **Student services**