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UNITED STATES DISTANCE LEARNING ASSOCIATION (USDLA) BOARD MEMBER DR. DARCY HARDY JOINS PRESIDENT OBAMA ADMINISTRATION VIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

USDLA supports the Department of Labor's efforts to integrate technology for improving education and learning to reach President Obama's goal of having the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020.

BOSTON ([PRWEB](#)) January 25, 2011 - The United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) today announced that past president and current board member Dr. Darcy Hardy, Assistant Vice Provost for Technology Education Initiatives, University of Texas at San Antonio, Office of Information Technology, has joined the Office of the Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration (ETA) within the United States Department of Labor on a one-year appointment. In addition to other projects related to online learning, Dr. Hardy will be supporting the recently announced Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) Grant Program (<http://www.grants.gov>) that plans to award approximately \$500 million through this grant program, for a total of \$2 billion over the next four years.

The program complements President Obama's goal of having the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020 by helping to increase the number of workers who attain degrees, certificates and other industry-recognized credentials. The grants will help provide quality education and training services to workers, as well as free online learning materials to expand access to education.

"We congratulate Darcy on being selected for such an important task for the United States and we stand ready to support her and the Administration as they work to increase the number of college graduates via the use of technology," said Dr. John G. Flores, Executive Director of USDLA. He noted, "Today distance learning is an ever growing entity within the education and training industry. Distance learners around the world continue to acquire knowledge 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. USDLA is an association which promotes the development and application of distance learning for a number of different constituencies, all of whom use varied technologies. Whether it is K-12, higher education, corporate, government, military, telehealth or home schooling, myriad numbers of courses, certificates and degree programs are available to meet anyone's specific need."

Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis commented "These grants will help colleges create programs that make it possible for workers to come back to school and acquire skills and industry-recognized credentials needed to compete for good jobs in growing industries." In addition, the Department recognizes Dr. Hardy has extensive experience in online learning initiatives and will serve as an education technology expert engaged in a variety of duties focused on providing technical assistance and guidance to explore how ETA can take advantage of online learning

advances currently available to other private sector and government agencies, and how best to incorporate these advances into our programs.

Applicants must be community colleges or other two-year degree granting institutions of higher education as defined in the Higher Education Act of 1965. The grants will enable eligible institutions to expand their capacity to create new education or training programs-or improve existing ones-to meet the needs of local or regional businesses. By statute, every state, as well as the District of Columbia and the commonwealth of Puerto Rico, will receive at least \$2.5 million each year in grant awards.

"These grants will help educators and industry work together to ensure that more students are graduating with the skills that employers need," said Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "This program is not about tinkering-it's about transformation. This is not about getting more students to enroll-it's about getting more students to graduation day and into good jobs."

Dr. Hardy is the recipient of numerous awards within the Distance Learning Industry. USDLA recognized her as an inductee into its Hall of Fame. Likewise Dr. Hardy has been honored by other organizations including WCET, TXDLA and UCEA. She is Past President of USDLA and author of numerous articles and books on distance Learning.

About United States Distance Learning Association

The United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) is a non-profit association formed in 1987 and is located in Boston, Massachusetts. USDLA promotes the development and application of distance learning for education and training and serves the needs of the distance learning community by providing advocacy, information, networking and opportunity. Distance learning and training constituencies served include pre-k-12 education, higher and continuing education, home schooling as well as business, corporate, military, government and telehealth markets. The USDLA trademarked logo is the recognized worldwide symbol of dedicated professionals. <http://www.usdla.org>