ASCUE

Our 40th Anniversary of Resource Sharing 1967 - 2006

Association of Small Computer Users in Education **November 2006**

President's Letter

Lisa Fears, President

The 2006 ASCUE Conference, "Maximizing Technology to Enhance Learning" held in Myrtle Beach last June 12-15, was truly successful. As has been the ASCUE tradition, a great deal of networking, discussions, and formal presentations gave all of us an opportunity to reflect and plan how to effectively use and support technology at our own campuses. The Keynote speaker was engaging, as well as entertaining. He was able to paint the picture of the generational student learning in our institutions presently, and encourage all of us to think about different ways to foster learning. As always, the fabulous environment at Ocean Creek Resort and Myrtle Beach enhanced everyone's stay. If you were unable to join us last June, we trust that you will make every effort to be there for our special anniversary ASCUE Celebration June 11 - 14, 2007 at Ocean Creek Resort and Conference Center. The 2007 conference marks the 40th year of the ASCUE association and we will celebrate in part with a theme **"Looking back, Charging Forward to Educate the Next Generation"**! Please mark your calendars now and plan to join our special conference.

The ASCUE Board met in late in September to review the summer '06 conference and to begin planning the '07 conference. Your ASCUE Board works very hard to put together a meaningful conference, and provide an opportunity for all of us to gain knowledge and share experiences that ultimately help us in our daily work. I consider it quite a privilege to work alongside them and to serve you in this capacity. Using the feedback received in the conference evaluations, the Board is making every effort to integrate a number of valuable ideas and suggestions into the 2007 conference.

In the fall board planning session, a great deal of time was spent discussing the following issues:

First, there will be an "ASCUE Member Reunion" on Sunday evening. In celebration of our 40th year, we invite members past and present to join us for a celebration including cake and ice cream. It is our hope that Elder members of our Association will share remembrances of ASCUE in the early days. In addition, our Wednesday night entertainment will be a special Ocean Cruise much like ASCUE members enjoyed in the early days of the association.

We successfully achieved online registration last year and plan to continue for this year our online registration. It is the hope of the board that this valuable timesaver will enhance your pre-conference experience.

We are still endeavoring to put in place a Peer Review Track. This notion was addressed in the form of a special survey during the '05 Conference Business Meeting and the response was overwhelmingly in favor of such an offering. The idea was discussed again in the

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ASCUE 2007

June 10 - 14, 2007
Ocean Creek Resort
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
Dress is Resort Casual

Highlights

Letter (continued from page 1)

further work has been accomplished to make this a reality. Please expect an update on this during our 2007 conference business meeting.

ASCUE once again will maintain the same, reasonable conference fees for next year. The registration fee (which includes annual membership) will remain at $200, and half-day pre-conference workshops will be $50. We are working on the details of the workshops topics, as we consider the feedback obtained from the evaluations.

We urge you to visit the ASCUE organization web site to stay in touch with the latest information regarding the conference. Email addresses on the site (www.ascue.org) that will be of help to you are:
conference@ascue.org : Program Chair George Pyo
president@ascue.org : President Lisa Fears

The ASCUE Board would like to encourage the membership to make greater use of our listserve. It provides a great vehicle for asking questions, sharing solutions, and staying in touch with conference attendees. To subscribe, visit the ASCUE website www.ascue.org , then click on the listserv tab http://listinfo.ascue.org. Complete directions are on the site and are repeated below.

Again, I hope you are planning to join us at the Special 40th Anniversary ASCUE Conference, June 10-14, 2007. A link to the call for papers is included in this issue. I encourage you to consider presenting a paper or participating in a panel discussion. As you think of ideas for topics please feel free to contact the Program Chair at conference@ascue.org.

Have a wonderful year, and I will see you in June! - Lisa

ASCUE LISTSERVE

We have recently moved the listserve from Gettysburg College to Philadelphia Biblical University and it is now managed by board member Blair Benjamin. Everyone who was signed up under ASCUE-L is now enrolled on the new site. Please note that you must be a subscriber/member in order to send messages to the listserve.

To send an e-mail message to the Listserve contact:

members@lists.ascue.org

For subscription or membership information please go to:
http://listinfo.ascue.org

ASCUE Board Members

Keynote Roundtable

facilitated by Chuck Dziuban and Patsy Moskal

The following highlights from the keynote address are needed to follow the roundtable discussion:

Most of the data and analysis presented during the keynote can be found at http://rite.ucf.edu rite stands for Research Initiative for Teaching Effectiveness at the University of Central Florida (UCF). Anyone is welcome to use any slides or papers the authors have prepared. The presenters are also willing to collaborate with faculty from other schools.

The theme of the keynote is that distance learning and blended learning (they call it mixed learning) changes very rapidly. We need alternative ways to evaluate the internet and its effect on teaching. Jay Forrester has said that you can never really anticipate how a change will ripple through a system. There will always be side effects.

UCF is growing at 10% a year, is currently at 45,000, and has an on-campus cap of 58,000. At this growth rate it will meet the cap in less than 3 years. It is unlikely that it will stop growing. Instead, it will depend on technology to get around the cap, perhaps by moving more of its courses totally online.

We always have to make decisions with incomplete information. The decision makers will look at the following data to help them decide the future of UCF:

- quality of face to face learning
- retention rates using different modalities
- learning styles and student reactive behavior problems
- generations students come from
- student satisfaction
- faculty satisfaction

Types of courses:

- fully on-line (most students are not on campus)
- web-enhanced (usually face to face, enhanced in some way with the web and technology. There is no such thing as a face to face course with no technology anymore)
- blended or mixed (students have both a classroom presence and an on-line presence, often one hour face to face and two hours on line in a week)

Some statistics about today's students

- 86% of homes have computers
- 74% of homes have internet access
- 60% of students use instant messaging
- 39% of students use cell phones

Considering a successful student as one who has a GPA of C or above, over 82% of students at UCF are successful, the withdrawal rate is less than 8%, they have an extensive faculty development program with lots of help developing on-line courses, and the student satisfaction rate is high. Convenience is the primary reason for taking on-line courses because parking is very hard to find on campus. Also students in on-line courses can work at their own convenience. Also, students like the technology.

The opportunities for improvement at UCF are reduced face to face time, technology problems like loss of power and difficulty contacting instructor, reduced instructor assistance, overwhelming workload for both faculty and students (to prevent cheating with so many resources on the web, faculty overcompensate), and motivation problems for students.

The presenters have identified 4 generations: Mature (born before 1946), Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Generation X (born 1965-1980), and Millenials (born 1981-1994). Matures are dedicated to their jobs, respectful of authority, and place duties before pleasure. Baby boomers live to work, are generally optimistic, and have great influence on policies and products. Gen Xers are the latch key generation and work to live, have clear and consistent expectations, and value contributing to the whole. For them every relationship is negotiated. Millenials are team oriented, live in the moment, expect immediency of technology (they google everything and knowledge is a mile wide and an inch deep), and earn money for immediate consumption. They don't go to the library and don't need to think about integrating technology – it is second nature.

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Questions answered by the presenters during the roundtable:

1. Have presenters looked at the effectiveness of teaching modalities in different disciplines, especially medical?

No, they have only studied differences between modalities. Blended courses have the best success rate. Fully on-line courses have slightly less success. Modality in itself does not make much difference. It is the department culture that is really important. There is a lower success rate in math and engineering courses. There is an interactive medical program developed by the gaming folks that simulates a patient named Kit and can be programmed to reveal any medical condition as the right questions are asked.

2. Do you find folks measuring grades using electronic portfolios in fully on line courses?

It is hard to find functioning e-portfolios. Face-to-face portfolios are commonly used in the Department of Education. UCF is currently looking at the problem of certifying that their students are information fluent. One problem is how do you drag this measurement across the curriculum. E-portfolios may help here. UCF is willing to collaborate with other schools facing this information fluency problem. One problem is defining the goals for info tech fluency. Do we start with information literacy? We have to leverage what the employment world wants and faculty have to integrate it into the curriculum.

3. What will replace Blackboard or WebCT as the next course management system. Will it be proprietary or open source?

Not much is known here. There is no data on the difference in student progress using different CMSes

4. Does the generation of faculty make a difference in success with on line teaching?

No, the critical measure is the focus of the faculty member on helping students learn.

5. Do faculty feel like they are actually "teaching" when they are facilitating on line courses?

It is more about learning than teaching. Web veterans lose their enthusiasm for teaching on line after a while. Blended courses are a good compromise. They can use what is on the web to augment what they present face to face. Michigan State registers students from all over the state in a course and then optimizes the location of the face-to-face sessions so travel time is minimized for everyone. Some on line courses are synchronous and students and faculty can see each other and interact on line using video technology. Wisconsin technical colleges are set up to do this.

Internet courses tend to be writing intensive and harder on both faculty and students. There is much more work than in face-to-face courses. Faculty have a hard time getting credit for time spent preparing on-line courses during the tenure and promotion process. A general rule is not to put large undergraduate courses on line. There really are no more purely traditional courses anymore. Every course qualifies as at least blended.

Small schools with highly valued residential culture may have trouble moving to fully on-line courses. For faculty to be successful teaching on line, they should have taken an on-line course themselves.

UCF uses learning outcomes to assess course success. They have found simulated cases the best way to assess outcomes. They also found that accreditation bodies don't know how to handle fully on-line courses.

6. If a student is successful in an on-line course, is there any data as to his or her success in courses for which the on line course is a prerequisite?

The presenters don't have data on this, but they have found that students learning to prioritize their school work does not translate to their ability to prioritize once they get into the work world. They are not able to organize, prioritize, and research a problem if it requires thinking outside the box. They tend to learn everything by rubric. The business world is moving from a command and control structure. For example, UPS now does all Toshiba repairs. A company in India contacted a member of the audience to develop a product that another U.S. firm had contracted the India company to develop.

Technical Issues Roundtable

facilitated by Blair Benjamin

Topics:

1. VM ware and virtual machines – are people using them in labs?

Philadelphia Biblical University is using VMware on servers. They can run multiple operating systems on the same machine. This is a software solution for testing applications, moving easily to other servers if one goes down, and providing rapid response to a request for a server. It takes only two clicks of a mouse to set up a new server. PBU wanted to move to high end rack mounted hardware. Each operating system copy had to be separately licensed. Note that Windows is moving to its own version of VMware and will allow up to three virtual servers on same license.

Loras College has found that net rollover has not worked well for them. The training is expensive and also the technology. Wabash College is looking at a free version of VMware. (See vmware.com). Dell and VMware have an alliance. Work with your Dell representative if you want to buy a box with many servers built in. (See dell.com/vmware)

One college uses VMware in their hacker labs since it allows them to safely run a client environment.

2. Calea - wiretapping laws.

Franklin College is trying to develop policies to handle the situation when the Feds give them a warrant demanding open access to all electronic communication systems on campus, e.g., Instant Messaging, email, voice over IP, etc. The Calea law gives the FBI the right to wiretap any form of communication and requires policies to be in place by September or October, 2006. It was not clear if the FBI had access to private nets or to CMS files. (See calea.org, askcalea.org, educause.edu/calea).

Northwest Ohio University has set up a steering committee for setting policy for Ohio colleges. Educause has recommended that all colleges have policies and procedures in place within 90-180 days and submit them to the FCC.

3. Open Source solutions to save money for small colleges

Sweet Briar College is using audacity for audio editing with some success. It is cross platform and works with windows, linux, and mackintosh.
(See sourceporch.audacity.net)

Several schools have implemented moodle as a substitute for Blackboard or WebCT. Moodle is free and once up and running is simple to use; the manager has to create the courses, the faculty provide the content, and the students enroll themselves. You can require an enrollment key so only students with the key can enroll in a given course. It may not interface with other integrated systems other than Datatel. Sweet Briar has written a users manual and set up a full day training workshop for faculty. Once they have completed the workshop they are ready to go. (See moodle.com and moodle.org)

Moodle only supports blended courses at present and does not interface with Power Campus. The moodle research development group is just starting to handle integration of college services.

Franklin College is using nagios for network monitoring and event handling. (See nagios.org) It can help avoid problems before they occur and automatically try to fix problems.

Philadelphia Biblical University uses RT help desk software. (See bestpractical.com/rt) It tracks work orders. You can get support from Redhat enterprizes for $50. (See redhat.com/rhel/details/academic)

Some other open source software in common use is firefox, open office, thunderbird, squirrel mail, IMP (see horde.org/imp).

A concern voiced by many is that their IT folks are wary of open source software because they don't think it will be supported. It you are careful to only use software with an active users group, you will get answers and often full blown work-arounds within hours, much

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faster than with proprietary software. In fact the lead developer is probably on the users group and will get back to you within a day. Also, there are more and more companies, like Novell, who are interested in supporting open source software.

4. Outsourcing

Loras College has partnered with moodle to provide remote server hosting for $1800 per year. (See remote-learner.net). As long as the moodle community supports it, remote-learner will install and support it. You get FTP access and complete control over the look and feel of the interface screens. Loras is using moodle to get students to sign off on lab policies. Two very helpful moodle addons are quickmail, an embedded email system to communicate with students inside moodle, and questionaire, which allows moodle users to create surveys.

Colleges like Wabash that outsource student help services choose an outsourcing company which provides the same quality of service that they would expect to give to their students.

5. Cost effective fail over systems

Montgomery Community College uses R&D Data to provide fail over systems on critical services. If one server goes down another comes up seamlessly. HP SAN (Storage Area Network) has lots of hard drives with a couple of controllers – if one fails the others stay up. Also VMware mentioned earlier is a good solution to the fail over problem. GAF has developed a snapshot agent which will integrate with Datatel – no interuption of services.

Academic Roundtable

facilitated by Beth Kiggins

Questions:

1. How are technology budget decisions made?

This question was raised by Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne. They are struggling with difficulties in funding technology. The IT folks at Florida Keys CC tell the administration exactly what they need. Faculty bring requests to a technology committee and if deemed feasible, the faculty meets personally with the committee to plead their own case. This relationship took years to develop. Berea College is working to reduce the time cycle between when ideas get generated and funding gets approved. They have budgeted extra money in order to immediately fund small things. IT needs to get out of making value decisions and turn this process over to the Dean's office.

Asheville BuncombeTechnical CC solicits needs from everyone. Recently, IT received new equipment and two-year-old computers being replaced were given to other departments who did not need state-of-the-art technology. At University of Indianapolis the perception was that the faculty were not happy with the technology allocation. They hired a consultant who found that the faculty indeed had no power in technology decisions. The consultants recommended that the learning resources committee be broadened to reflect faculty ideas and the committee above the LRC have the authority to spend IT money. They also set aside money for small projects.

Wabash College leases all their equipment on a replacement cycle so there is a much smaller scope of funding decisions to be made each year. At Arcadia University the faculty committee has its own $30K budget. Faculty can request funding directly from the committee for creative projects.

2. Hampden-Sydney College asked if other schools separate their budget between hardware and software? At Hampden-Sydney everything is on the same table, i.e., there is no hardware replacement if they need to upgrade Blackboard.

One school treats requests greater than $1K as capital projects. Wabash breaks their budget into campus-wide projects, department projects, and personal projects, and they try to annualize these costs so there is some money for each category. Several schools mentioned that it is hard to differentiate between academic and administrative projects because the staff overseeing them is now integrated.

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3. How do folks use the technology fee collected from students?

At the University of Saint Francis (IN) this money has to be spent on strictly student-centered projects. Blackboard cannot be funded from the fees, for example. Student lab equipment and supplies can be. At Saint Francis University (PA) the fees are used to support their laptop initiative. Another $50K is used to subsidize faculty department requests. IT looks at every requisition to make sure it is compatible and divides all their technology requests into Academic software, Academic hardware, Administrative software, and Administrative hardware. The infonet committee then decides on the funding.

4. How do Computer Science departments avoid faculty burnout?

Loads are very heavy, student contact hours high, and it is very hard to recruit faculty. (Saint Mary's College). At Florida Keys CC faculty get paid extra ($1K) for teaching an overload. At the University of Saint Francis they do department head training through the Council of Independent Colleges. One needs to change the institutional culture to support first year faculty, giving them reduced loads. Also, it is important not to nickel and dime departments over trivia (i.e., don't get caught up in hassling over a chair). We need to validate faculty – make them feel that the time away from their family is much appreciated.

One of the department chairs at Asheville Buncombe Technical CC works 60-70 hours per week acting as a buffer for her faculty. Her role is to go to bat to make sure her faculty have what they need. One can often assign classes so the early birds get the 8am classes and others get the late afternoon ones. Faculty don't need much – just need to feel they are appreciated.

5. Does technology use count towards tenure?

At Saint Mary's College it is listed as a factor, but is not decisive by any means. Teaching, Scholarship and Service are the determining factors.

6. How are training/travel budgets determined? $300 per person per year is not satisfactory.

Hanover College allots $650 if a conference attendee does not present, $1,000 if he or she does. At Saint Mary's College the amounts are $600 and $1200. At IPFW every person has $600 travel money budgeted. If it is not used for travel, it can be used for other things. A faculty member can augment the $600 with a grant from the technology committee.

7. Are folks going to open source course management systems?

At Wabash, they are switching to moodle, but it was not a faculty decision; it should have been. At some schools faculty want to use moodle but IT will not permit it, being worried that open source software will be hard to support. A good indicator that a school should change to a different CMS is if the adoption of the current CMS stalls at a low participation level.

ASCUE 2007 Call for Proposals:
http://fits.depauw.edu/ascue/2007/call.asp