

President's Letter

Fred Jenny, President

The 2001 ASCUE Conference, "Forging Educational Stakeholder Partnerships Through Information Technology," in Myrtle Beach last June 10-14, was a great success! A wide variety of attendee presentations, pre-conference workshops, roundtable discussions, and a thought-provoking keynote speaker provided stimulation for continued discussion, sharing, and learning among all the conferees. The beautiful environs of 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 ASCUE's 35th annual conference, June 9-13, 2002 at Ocean Creek Resort and Conference Center. Mark your calendars!

The ASCUE Board met in late September to work and to begin planning next year's conference. Your ASCUE Board is a dedicated, hard working group. I have fully enjoyed working with them over the past two years. Using the feedback received in the conference evalua-

tions, the Board is making every effort to integrate a number of valuable ideas and suggestions into the next conference.

ASCUE has maintained the same, reasonable conference fees for next year. The registration fee (which includes annual membership) will still be \$200, all-day pre-conference workshops will be \$100, and half-day pre-conference workshops will be \$50. We are working on the details of the workshop topics, as we consider the feedback obtained from the evaluations. Ocean Creek Resort pricing is holding steady as well, with minimal changes in the cost of lodging. Ocean Creek representatives assure us that our conference rates will be 10% less than regular prices.

As you visit the ASCUE organization web site, you will soon notice that it has a new look and feel. The overall layout and presentation of the site are being redesigned. Email addresses on the site (www.ascue.org) that will be of help to you are:

conference@ascue.org: Program Chair Nancy Thibeault
newsletter@ascue.org: Newsletter Editor Peter Smith
memberatlarge@ascue.org: Board Members at Large, Barry Smith and George Pyo
president@ascue.org:

President Fred Jenny
websitecoordinator@ascue.org:
Past President & Web Site Coordinator Carol Smith

The ASCUE Board would like to encourage the membership to make greater use of our listserv, ASCUE-L. It provides a great vehicle for asking questions, sharing solutions, and staying in touch with conference attendees. To subscribe, send a message to listserv@gettysburg.edu with *SUBSCRIBE ASCUE-L yourname* in the body of the message.

Again, I hope you are planning to join us at the 35th Annual ASCUE Conference, June 9-13, 2002. The 2002 conference program chair is

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ASCUE '02

June 9 - 13, 2002

Ocean Creek Resort

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Dress is Resort Casual

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Nancy Thibeault from Sinclair Community College, and 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 Nancy at conference@ascue.org or Nancy.Thibeault@sinclair.edu. Have a great year! I'm looking forward to seeing all of you in Myrtle Beach in June!! – Fred

Roundtable - Administration

Facilitator – Kathy Decker, Clarke College;
Scribe: Fred Jenny, Grove City College

We listed the Educause Top Ten List of issues from last year and used that list as an outline for our Roundtable. The list included:

Funding, Faculty Development, Distance Education, Electronic Learning Environments, Enterprise Administrative Systems, IT Staffing, Strategic Planning, Online Student Services, Advanced Networking, and Support Services Demands.

Even with the generous amount of time allotted, we only addressed Funding, Faculty Development, Distance Education, Electronic Learning Environments, Enterprise Administrative Systems, IT Staffing, and Support Services Demands.

Funding: Leasing systems and networking systems seemed to be a prevalent approach. Budgeting the leasing costs is paramount. IT must have a financial plan. What about technology fees? Where do they go at the institutions that have them? Some go into the general fund. Other institutions document (post) those items or programs that benefit as a result of the monies acquired. Has anyone calculated what IT funds are spent on students (per student)? \$50/semester for equipment replacement for one school (3500 students). Another school charges a fee /course and the money is returned to the department. Other examples: \$80/PC fee, \$x/printer is allocated per department to fund hardware replacement; \$5/credit (up to \$75) where a committee allocates monies as follows: 20% for campus labs, 35% for IT infrastructure, 40% for student life and learning, and 5% reserve. IT infrastructure is now a **utility**; like any other utility that an institution funds, it must be maintained.

Faculty Development: There were many novel approaches to supporting faculty with respect to technology. The approaches include: a full-time technology specialist; a teamwork approach through the help desk; a “faculty advocate” given released time to give input to instructional technology and IT department; and a “TLC Square” which is faculty run. In the latter, a faculty member teaches a class of 10 other faculty for a stipend or released time.

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ASCUE Board Members

President Fred Jenny
Grove City College
100 Campus Drive
Grove City, PA 16127-2104
724-458-2071
fjjenny@gcc.edu

Past President Carol Smith
DePauw University
Greencastle, IN 46135
768-658-4287
clsmith@depauw.edu

Program Chair Nancy Thibeault
Sinclair Community College
444 West Third St.
Dayton, OH
937-512-2926
Nancy.Thibeau@sinclair.edu

Treasurer Thomas Pollack
Duquesne University
706 Rockwell Hall
Pittsburgh, PA 15282
412-396-1639
pollack@duq.edu

Secretary Kim Breighner
Gettysburg College
Gettysburg, PA 17325
717-337-6932
kbreighn@gettysburg.edu

Newsletter Editor Peter Smith
Saint Mary's College
Notre Dame, IN 46556
219-284-4493
psmith@saintmarys.edu

Historian/Local Arrangements Jack Cundiff
Horry-Georgetown Technical College
Box 1966, Conway, SC 29526
803-347-3186
cundiffj@sccoast.net

Board Members At Large

George Pyo
Saint Francis College
Loretto, PA 15940
814-472-3241
gpyo@sfcpa.edu

Barry Smith
Baptist Bible Col
538 Venard Rd
Clarks Summit,
PA 18411
570-586-2400
bcsmith@bbc.edu

Equipment Coordinator
Young Harris College
P.O. Box 160
Young Harris, GA 30582
706-379-3111 x 5210
hollist@yhc.edu

Hollis Townsend

Roundtable – Distance Education

Facilitator: Tom Gusler, Clarion College

Scribe: Peter Smith, Saint Mary's College

There were a number of topics discussed at this roundtable and good attendance, proving that distance and web-based learning is a hot topic with ASCUE attendees. I will list each topic and summarize the discussion surrounding it.

Funding

Sinclair Community College in Ohio, with 21,000 students, has many years of experience with this type of education. They have worked out a formula in which they give a faculty member 5 release hours to develop an on-line course and pay them 0.2 hrs per student each time they teach it. (I.e., it would take 15 students to bring the faculty member to full pay for the course; each student above that number would be a bonus.) They also sent a staff member to a course on how to teach online. She will now lead a roundtable with interested faculty members.

Macon State in Georgia received a \$4 million grant from the Board of Regents. They have used this money to hire a number of design folks to help faculty prepare on-line courses. They are just developing their first course and faculty pay for teaching has not yet been addressed.

To get around the problem of slow or no Internet access for rural students, they cut a CD with the course materials on it, and will sell the CD to each student upon registration. Tom Horn from Cleveland College of Art mentioned that the OHIO State board of regents is a good source of funding for distance and web-based learning at colleges in Ohio.

The Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia recently received a \$300,000 grant from Lilly to hire additional faculty and staff and improve their distance ed program. Salve Regina in Rhode Island gives laptops to faculty willing to develop distance learning courses. Horry Georgetown Technical College in South Carolina received a Title 3 grant supporting a mentoring program. This pays for released time for an experienced faculty member to help 4 or 5 other faculty get started.

One school provided funding for faculty to develop interactive sites. Then they funded blackboard for the whole campus. Now they are starting to fund a vendor to outsource the design and content of web-based

lessons. Another college excused faculty who were developing and teaching distance education courses from committee service.

Another funding source is for industries to contract out the training of their employees to colleges and community colleges. The money received can help fund the development of on-line courses. The industry can negotiate a reduced tuition by guaranteeing a full enrollment in the course they are contracting for.

Faculty Training and Support

Some ideas on this topic came up when discussing funding, above. Mercer College tried to train faculty top-down, but it was hard to get them to come to large sessions. Now, they go out to individuals as they show interest. This seems to work better. A few schools are successfully using students to help faculty prepare web-based lessons.

Steve Anderson at USC Sumpter has found that the second wave of faculty to get into distance education don't need as much training in the technology and content preparation, but do need help in how to manage time. It is important to include these folks in training programs even though they seem to be doing pretty well at handling technology and content preparation.

Time Management

Milliken University in Illinois is experiencing a faculty culture of suspicion about distance learning. Their faculty worry that distance learning involves lots of office hours handling email from distance students and also that distance education seems so impersonal. The University of Northwest Ohio also experienced this culture. Their faculty tried to handle the added contact by holding chat room sessions in the evening, using message boards where students could answer each other's questions, and team collaboration at remote sites. They found that distance learning did require a lot more involvement of the faculty member than regular courses. After the first course you develop, it gets easier.

JD Knode, with his father Steve, has been developing intelligent bots that can read and respond to email messages, telling students where to look up answers to predictable problems. The bot can filter urgent messages to the teacher as well as roam the Internet, finding

sites that are useful for the teacher's research or teaching. Their work will soon become commercially available.

Student Motivation

A student also puts in many more hours while taking a distance education course than while taking a regular face-to-face course, especially while using the Internet. Students need a strategy for managing their time on-line.

There is also the frustration of having the system go down while on-line, often from home computer hardware problems, ISP failure, or locked-up software at the home school. Sometimes the material does not transmit well over some browser software, either Internet Explorer or Netscape (E.g., AOL has difficulties with Web CT, and Web CT looks different on I.E. and Netscape). Some employers have firewalls that do not let the course material through.

One school found that requiring students to come to campus once a month at least, helped improve motivation. It is especially helpful to have lab sessions on the home campus. It also helps to have everyone present in a few face-to-face sessions at the beginning of the course, where expectations can be set and some common problems ironed out. A number of those in attendance used this approach with success. The distance learning teacher must be constantly on the alert for motivation problems. These must be faced up front and throughout the semester.

One faculty member mentioned that animation was also important for motivation. He found that on-line and face-to-face delivery was converging as both began to rely on downloaded lecture notes and handouts. As simulation becomes easier to prepare, laboratory work may involve much more simulation (i.e., dry labs).

Assessment and Testing

Sinclair has developed testing centers throughout its student area. The instructor sends tests to the testing centers and students come to the center to take the tests.

This is expensive and needs a high volume of distance education courses and students to make it cost effective.

The issue of plagiarism came up as particularly hard to catch with remote students. Someone mentioned the anti-plagiarism tool, EVE2, which can be downloaded from the web. You feed it a student paper and it tells

you what percent of the paper was plagiarized and where the plagiarism is to be found. There are various settings and at some of the more stringent levels EVE2 can take a long time to grind through a paper.

Some instructors set up on-line tests with time limits. This requires that students all start at the same time at their computers. The test only becomes available at the start of the test period, and the students have to submit their answers by the end of the allotted time period.

Some schools are using on-line placement exams to see which courses an entering student should take. It would be possible for someone else to take the exam for the student, but after the first few classes it would be obvious that the student was in the wrong level course.

Who Owns the Distance Learning Course

At Mercer, the faculty member owns the course unless there is a contract set up outside the normal development process in which the faculty member essentially sells his right to the course for remuneration. At Arondel Community College, both the college and the faculty member retain rights to the course materials. If the faculty member leaves he or she can use the coursework at the next institution, and the former college can adapt the course as needed for other offerings of the course. This seemed to be the fairest arrangement for all concerned.

Can All Disciplines Utilize Distance Education/Web Based Learning

Some schools mentioned that their natural science faculty were not buying in to this type of learning. Others found that disciplines that require hands-on work (e.g., vocational training, nursing, etc.) were having difficulty with distance ed. Someone mentioned that medical schools had done some of the pioneering work in this area.

Tom Gusler suggested that a good source for resolving this question would be the course listing at University of Phoenix. This institution has probably the highest percentage of on-line courses in the country. If a discipline has only a few course listings at U of Phoenix, then developing distance education materials for that discipline is probably more difficult or the demand is low.

Certification Problems

Schools or programs facing re-certification are particularly concerned about distance learning. How can they prove that they teach to the same standards on-line as they do face-to-face, especially concerning library resources. One school actually had to lease a moveable building and secure it to a free-standing one to meet the library requirements at a remote site.

When a school is getting started with distance/web-based learning they need to face and resolve the following four issues:

- Library resources
- Funding
- Infrastructure (i.e., content creation and delivery)
- Standards for student entry-level equipment

Apropos the equipment issue, one attendee asked about the state of voice recognition software. Is this robust enough for students without physical access to keyboards to use to interact with distance learning materials? Someone mentioned desktop video conferencing as a possibility. Another equipment issue is slow modem speed. It appears that wireless technology is more common in Europe and is not available in rural U.S. The recent hand-held PDA deluge may improve wireless communication and may be a way to foster distance education.

The session closed with some comments from Bob Sedlmeyer at IUPUI/Fort Wayne, Indiana. He mentioned that the advantage of being a late adopter is that much of the distance learning course content is already being developed by the publishers and will probably be adaptable for individual professors. Already, Course Technology and Prentice Hall will custom package materials from different texts/courses for sale to students. The time management issue will become a course management one and can be controlled by setting student expectations clearly (in the syllabus and throughout the course). The funding issue can be met by charging more for the distance courses because they cost more. (E.g., Purdue vet technology school has to set up proctoring centers to videotape students in their work

and pay full-time faculty members to look at the videotapes.)

Administration Roundtable

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Distance Education (DE):

What does DE mean to small schools such as ASCUE schools? Many regions are sharing expertise, but not without difficulty. Cooperative approaches seem to work where regional campuses of ONE institution share offerings & resources. Does NOT work when unrelated schools attempt to collaborate. Some schools require that X% of offerings be taken via DE. Completion rate? Support?

Electronic Learning Environments:

Wireless environments are being given substantial consideration in many institutions. Doesn't replace the need for wiring. Need the best of both worlds.

Enterprise Administrative Systems:

Among the participants, we found that there are still a couple of home-grown systems. Generally there is a large mix of platforms out there in academia. What about bandwidth problems on the backbone? Packet-Shaper and Packeteer were packages that were mentioned with varied success.

IT Staffing:

Very challenging now on the academic side of the house. Retaining technicians is a common challenge. Schools that are located in more rural areas seem to be able to retain staff better – perhaps because the rural environment is what partly attracts those people.

Support Services Demands:

One institution posts performance objectives on the web for the campus community. Another institution posts exactly what they support.

CALL FOR PAPERS, TUTORIALS, AND PANEL SESSIONS
2002 Annual ASCUE Summer Conference
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
June 9-13, 2002
“Our Second Quarter Century of Resource Sharing”

The Association of Small Computer Users in Education, ASCUE, is seeking proposals from faculty and staff for presentations at its 35th **Annual Summer Conference**. Proposals should focus on issues in information technology that are of interest to small educational institutions. Proposals on any relevant topic are acceptable, but those that support the conference theme, **“Exploring the Impact of Technology on Teaching and Learning,”** are particularly welcome.

Session Format: Session presentations are limited to 45 minutes, including time set aside for audience questions and engagement. They can be in traditional paper, panel, demonstration, or tutorial format. Presentations will be printed in the Conference Proceedings that are distributed at the conference and submitted to the Educational Resource Information Center for inclusion in the ERIC database.

Pre-Conference Workshops and Seminars: In addition to presenters for the main conference program, we are seeking individuals to lead 6 hour full-day or 3 hour half-day workshops or seminars for the pre-conference program on Sunday, June 9. The workshops, held in computer labs at Horry-Georgetown Technical College, provide hands-on learning with specific technologies such as the Web or multimedia. Seminars are classroom-style presentations, held at Ocean Creek, that explore important topics in the application of education technologies. These workshops and seminars have been very successful at past conferences and help set the tone for the conference.

Suggested Topics include ¼

Teaching & Learning: Distance learning, impact of technology on faculty and students, increasing student engagement via technology, building and sustaining learning communities, assessing student learning in technology-enhanced and distance learning classes, designing courses that are ADA/508 compliant, technology-integration models, evolution in curriculum, technology and tenure, information technology and the library, ownership of materials, technology classrooms & labs, department labs, copyrights, lessons learned, faculty recruitment, tools (e.g., collaborative software, Web course hosting)

Institutional Infrastructure & Services: Portals, strategies for information integration, corporate competition, a computer for every pillow, IT-24-7, residential network support, security issues, impact of the Web, faculty and student access, IT and admissions, IT organization/reorganization, IT and strategic planning, information systems and tools of the trade

Support & Training: Faculty-staff-student training, staff turnover, professional development for IT staff, help desk issues, outsourcing, student assistants/employees/interns, public labs, tools

Campus Communication: Intranets, email, homepages, video-conferencing, changes to traditional processes (alumni, admissions, PR), policy issues, standards, application of new technologies, tools (e.g., push technologies, calendars).

Operating Systems: Windows XP, Linux and Open systems Architecture.

Formats: Papers Panel discussions Software demonstrations Tutorials Workshops

Submitting a Proposal

We invite you to become a part of this growing conference. Submit a proposal for a session presentation, demonstration, or workshop by completing the online form at www.ascue.org before January 18, 2002. Notification of acceptance will be made by February 18, 2002. Questions should be sent to: **Nancy Thibeault, 2002 ASCUE Program Chair, Sinclair Community College, Dayton, OH, nthibeau@sinclair.edu**