

ASCUE 2002

ASCUE 2002 Conference

Planning Builds Momentum

Nancy Thibeault Program Chair

Plans for the 35th Annual ASCUE Summer Conference are underway! The presentation proposals are interesting and varied, and demonstrate the widespread impact of technology in higher education today. A number of proposals will focus our attention on this year's theme, "Exploring the Impact of Technology on Teaching and Learning." Considered as a whole, the presentation proposals demonstrate the strength and value of ASCUE – members who are willing to share their learning and expertise with each other at the annual meeting. Our members make the conference!

This year's conference will again begin with Sunday's sessions of hands-on workshops. Attendees will have the option of investigating a number of tools: Vegas Video, Linux, Dreamweaver

UltraDev, VR Worlds, and Blackboard. Plan for a little professional development!

Other popular events will include the Sunday evening family barbeque, an outing to Broadway at the Beach, an ice cream social, and an evening at the Carolina Opry. Of course there will still be plenty of opportunities for learning and sharing "offline" – for renewing old acquaintances, making new friends, or hitting the beach for a swim with family and friends.

Your ASCUE Board is busy finalizing the details in planning the conference. We will be sure to keep you informed as the process moves along, through the ASCUE listserv, ASCUE-L, and the conference web site:

<http://www.ascue.org>

Additional information about the conference, including registration and travel information will be published in the conference announcement in late March.

ASCUE 2002 offers a great opportunity for professional development in an environment that is relaxed, friendly, and just plain fun! Join us June 9 – 13 in sunny Myrtle Beach. And bring someone with you!

If you have any questions, please call me at (937) 512-2926, or send a message to:

Nancy.Thibeault@Sinclair.edu

I look forward to seeing you at the conference.

Roundtable Discussion on "Helpdesk Issues and Student Workers"

By Fred Lang of Grove City College and Kim Breighner of Gettysburg College

Fred kicked off the conversation with a brief explanation of the Helpdesk situation at Grove City

Helpdesk – continued on page 2

ASCUE' 02

June 9 - 13, 2002

Ocean Creek Resort

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Dress is Resort Casual

Highlights

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Helpdesk Roundtable | 1 |
| Peter Smith Profile | 4 |
| ASCUE' 02 Conference Pricing | 7 |

Helpdesk (continued from page 1)

in which there is limited student-to-student resolution of problems and he himself takes care of all employee help desk requests.

Some people said that their institutions were doing away with student workers on the help desk and hiring full-time employees instead, but some said that it still works out best for them to have students staffing at least the student help desk.

Wake Forest arranges for students to work for companies over the summer months in internship programs. They then come back to school and work for the computing department, knowing that they then have a job waiting for them when they graduate.

It was mentioned that St. Vincent College just went through a conversion to Outlook. They used students to help with the migration which in turn made faculty realize that students were more capable than they originally thought. It also improved the students' ability to become more project oriented. They then used the public folders feature within Outlook to form a knowledge base of sorts.

At Wabash College a group of seniors were selected to split their senior year over a two-year period in order to work more full-time for the computing department. In return, the department paid their expenses plus a salary. They started the program in the hopes that these students would then in turn continue to work for the department, but unfortunately this did not happen and the program had to be discontinued.

Philadelphia Biblical University has been fairly successful in hiring seniors after they have graduated. It was also mentioned that they use VNC (Virtual Network Computing) and Zenworks as their desktop management

Helpdesk - Continued on Page 3

ASCUE WEB SITE

To view the papers for the last four conferences and also the last four newsletters in electronic form, go to:

<http://www.ascue.org>

ASCUE's ASCUE-L listserv is also available for discussion of topics of interest to ASCUE members. Subscribe by sending the E-mail message:

SUBSCRIBE ASCUE-L yourname

to listserv@gettysburg.edu. Send messages to ascue-l@gettysburg.edu

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Helpdesk – continued from page 2

tools to help with help desk requests. They are in the planning stages of creating a knowledge base for users to draw information from.

Jackson Community College uses Magic from Network Solutions to create and maintain their knowledge base.

We discussed how information from the Help desk was very helpful in discovering training needs on campus. Some institutions use this information to conduct regular training sessions, others use it to create additional on-line resources, and yet others use this information as a basis for conducting one-on-one training with users in their offices to ensure they reach a higher level of competency.

Most people agreed that CBT-type training resources were not as successful at their institutions. The main complaint was that the training was not specific enough to their needs. Unfortunately, though it takes more of a trainer's time, the one-on-one approach is a lot more successful because the training can be very tailored to the user's needs.

Some institutions found that holding brown bag lunch sessions where trainers were there to address each person's specific needs worked well. The training was able to be as customized as needed and other users learned things they didn't even know they needed. Also, it seems that quite a few institutions are using Blackboard or a similar software package for creating course web sites for learning materials, class discussions, and even tests online.

A question was raised about how to handle problems like when faculty add downloads to their computer that cause problems. Should you lock down machines where users are notorious for doing this type of thing? Should you just re-image the PC and say sorry Charlie?

At least communicating a policy about the types of heroic measures that can be taken in these types of cases seems to be a good answer.

Another big problem that seems to be fairly universal is that a user will call whomever they know in the computing department on campus instead of the help desk whenever they have a problem. Granted, this may be caused by slow responses by the help desk staff or some other similar reason, but it is still important for all of the requests to be entered into the help desk database.

What is the best way to train people to do this? One answer was to let all inside phone calls go to your voice mail and transfer any of these types of calls to the help desk. Another would be for you to indicate the importance of having their request in the help desk database and transfer their call to the help desk. Still some people say that it is just so much easier to help them out very quickly right then and there. The thing here is for the person that helped out to put the request into the help desk database and close it out with an explanation of how you helped the person so that when a knowledge base is built, your "quickie" solution is built into that base. We recognize that doing this takes twice as long as it did to just help the person, but we also recognize the importance of doing so.

The topic of outsourcing all help desk calls after hours was also discussed, but who pays for this service? One institution is doing this right now and the computing department is paying for it. So far the program does seem to be a success. Another institution simply transfers all helpdesk calls after regular hours to their library because there is always someone working there in the evenings and weekends. This can then become a problem in several ways: the library employees either

have to be fairly techno-savvy or the users must realize that they are simply there to take messages for the computing department to handle the next day or whatever; they have a job to do also and the number of help desk calls may rise in number to the point that they can not perform their regular duties or they may have to hire additional employees just to handle the extra work; and there would have to be a very good communication tool between the evening employees taking the information and the computing folks to ensure all the requests are handled properly.

Since Grove City College has gone to a required laptop program, the number of help desk requests have dropped. And since everyone has basically the same laptop, the questions tend to be along the same lines and are more easily answered for the most part.

Also discussed was the idea of bringing the student workers to campus a week ahead of the rest of the classes for training for the upcoming year so that they can then help train the incoming first year students during their orientation period before classes begin.

They, of course, have to be paid for the hours they are in training and, in most cases, the computing department pays for their meals and housing for the week.

As for training first year students when they arrive on campus for the year, training sessions range anywhere from 45 minutes to more than one hour. Also, some sessions are hands-on and some are just front-of-room display type sessions.

Another topic that was brought up was the ability to provide for different levels of pay for the various different groups of student workers. We found that there are quite a few institutions struggling with the problem of either not having the option of more than one level of pay or having trouble hiring good students because other departments on campus can afford to pay them more. Our only defense then is to tell them that having a job with our department on their resume will enable them to get a better job than perhaps the competing department. Past success stories of other student workers help very much in this regard.

Also discussed was the issue of hiring summer student workers. In most cases the housing issue was a real stumbling block. You either have to depend on hiring a student who already has an apartment if residential halls are not available or possibly pay them more so that they can pay for some type of summer housing and still have enough money left over.

All the topics that were discussed were very interesting ones and we didn't figure out a way of tackling all of them, but it was very nice to know that we're all pretty much in the same boat.

Proposal to Drop the Spring Newsletter

By Peter Smith

I intend to propose to the ASCUE Board that we drop the Spring Newsletter and expand the Fall Newsletter to include all the roundtable reports, because no one has submitted articles for the spring newsletter and its publication date coincides with the Conference Announcement which contains the same information. Please email if you disagree with me.

ASCUE “Know Your Board” Profile: Peter Smith

Peter Smith recently retired from Saint Mary's College in northern Indiana, where he had spent the last 32 years teaching Math and Computer Science. Before that he did his undergraduate work at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass, and received an M.S. in Math from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA, while he taught full time as an officer in the Navy. It was here, in 1962, that he first learned to program (in FORTRAN and CDC Assembly Language) and grew to dislike the cutthroat culture surrounding the jockeying for scarce computer time.

Peter completed his PhD in Mathematics at the University of Wisconsin in 1968 without ever touching a computer or even a punched card except to register for classes. His thesis was typed on a typewriter with all the symbols carefully drawn by hand using a stencil. A short stint at Xavier University in New Orleans brought him in contact with an IBM 1130 and the acquaintance of two staff members who were involved in the early days of ASCUE (then CUETUG – College and University Eleven-Thirty Users Group). However, he left Xavier for Saint Mary's before hearing about the organization and did not attend his first ASCUE conference until 1986.

Peter was the first math teacher with a PhD to work at Saint Mary's and for a few years – until 1973 – he happily taught pure and applied math with never a thought about computers. However he soon realized that students graduating in the mid-seventies needed to have a computer background since business data processing was a fact of life. It was with some trepidation that he convinced the administration to fund five dedicated lines from teletypes at Saint Mary's to a timesharing service in Chicago. He offered the first computer course that year – a hodge-podge of Basic, FORTRAN, COBOL, and Assembly Language. After a few years, Saint Mary's bought its first timesharing computer. There was not enough capacity to handle both administrative and academic work simultaneously, so faculty and students used the computer from noon to midnight and the administration took over from midnight to noon.

Due for a sabbatical in 1975, Peter decided to pursue an M.S. in Computer Science at Michigan State. By that time, he was a single father caring for two small children, so he could not afford the half pay for a full-year sabbatical. He taught full time at Saint Mary's in the

fall with all the classes (12 contact hours) crammed into a Tuesday-Thursday schedule and commuted by train and bus to East Lansing for a full load of graduate classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Fortunately, Michigan State was on the quarter system, so this crazy commute only lasted for 10 weeks.

Finishing the M.S. in one academic year plus a summer, Peter returned to Saint Mary's with a much better idea of what constituted a program in Computer Science. He began attending SIGCSE and NECC (National Education Computing Conference) regularly. He introduced Computer Science and Information Science minors at the college, but opposed the formation of a major program. He believed that a small liberal arts college was no place for a major program in Computer Science – they could not afford to staff or equip such a major. In fact, a paper to this effect written in the mid-eighties was what finally brought him to ASCUE.

The computer environment at Saint Mary's had changed considerably by the mid eighties. Academic and administrative computing no longer competed for resources. The college had hired a new Computer Center Director who was an advocate of student-centered computing. He had written a fine integrated administrative system tailored to Saint Mary's (which was used until the late nineties). He had received the ASCUE summer conference announcement which is sent to thousands of Deans and Computer Center Directors. He decided to present a paper about the new Saint Mary's Registrar's system and convinced Peter to send in his paper on why small liberal arts colleges should not have a Computer Science major.

Both papers were accepted (almost all papers submitted to ASCUE are accepted), and off they went to Myrtle Beach. The conference was not at Ocean Creek, but was on the ocean and drew a large number (by ASCUE standards) of attendees. Before that year, the ASCUE conferences had been held at colleges throughout the mid-west and southwest, most with non-air-conditioned dorms and meeting rooms. When the attendance at the conferences spiraled down dangerously low, the Board decided to try resort accommodations.

Both Saint Mary's papers were well received and Peter

was so impressed with the quality of the presentations and the dedicated and friendly conference attendees that he has returned every year since 1986. In 1993, the Public Relations director, Wally Roth, who had held the post since the mid seventies, resigned. After an interim director lasted only one year, Peter volunteered to take over in 1994. The job responsibilities had increased significantly a few years before, when proceedings were first made available during the conference - edited by the program chair and printed by the PR director.

Because the program chair's job responsibilities were so daunting and it was getting harder to find good candidates for this position, the Board decided to farm out some of the program chair's responsibilities to other board members. Now the President is responsible for workshops, the Past President for keynote speakers, a board member at large for vendors, and the public relations director handles both the editing and the printing of the proceedings.

Some of Peter's other interests have been writing tutorials for productivity software, studying trends in computer use at small liberal arts colleges, and teaching using the philosophy of Process Education. He has used this student-centered teamwork approach to teaching both Math and Computer Science since 1992 with some success. Copies of papers presented at ASCUE are on his web site:

<http://www.saintmarys.edu/~psmith> and any results may be freely used and distributed. In his spare time he enjoys reading and remodeling/repairing old houses.

Although he retired from Saint Mary's in May, 2001, he continued to teach in the fall at Saint Mary's (since they are into the third year of a search to replace him) and in the spring at Suffolk University in Boston as a favor to a colleague and the opportunity to stay with his son's family which includes two delightful grandchildren. He has an office and email address at Saint Mary's, but will have the ASCUE proceedings printed at Gettysburg College this year. He is looking forward to reading your papers and attending his 16th ASCUE conference in June, and hopefully many more to come.

ASCUE Conference June 9-13, 2002

"Exploring the Impact of Technology on Teaching and Learning"
Ocean Creek Resort and Conference Center, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
<http://www.ascue.org>

Conference Pricing Information

Complete Registration information will be available in the conference announcement in March 2002

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION:

| | Postmarked by May 10 | Postmarked after May 10 |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Conference registration - First member | \$200 | \$225 |
| Conference registration - Additional member | \$155 | \$180 |
| Conference registration - Corporation | \$275 | \$300 |
| Family Picnic (evening of 6/9) Adults: | \$6 | |
| Children ages 5-12: | \$3 | |

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS:

| | | |
|---|--------------|-------|
| 1. Hedging Your Bet with Vegas Video 3.0 | (9am – 4pm) | \$100 |
| 2. A Penguin on your Desk – An Introduction to Linux | (9am – 4pm) | \$100 |
| 3. Bootstrapping Web Database Systems with Dreamweaver Ultradev | (9am – 4pm) | \$100 |
| 4. Building Virtual Environments for Teaching and Learning (educational VR worlds) | (1pm – 4pm) | \$ 50 |
| 5. Web-based Teaching and Learning with Blackboard | (9am – noon) | \$ 50 |

Specific workshop descriptions will be available in the conference announcement in late March.

HOUSING:

Ocean Creek Resort, Myrtle Beach, SC
800-845-0353, www.oceancreek.org
Group # 22416, Register before May 10

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Studio - | \$ 86.00 |
| 1-Bedroom Lodge villa - | \$ 98.00 |
| 2-Bedroom Lodge villa - | \$129.00 |
| 2-Bedroom Tower North - | \$216.00 |
| 3-Bedroom Tower North - | \$242.00 |

(Add 9.5% South Carolina State Tax)

AIR TRANSPORTATION:

U.S. Airways has been chosen as the official carrier for the conference and offers exclusive low fares for flying to/from Myrtle Beach Between June 5 – 17, 2002. The gold file number is 96692342. Call U.S. Airways Group Reservation Office at 800-874-7687 between 8:00am and 9:30pm Eastern Time. These fares include a 5% discount on the lowest published fares with an additional 5% discount for booking the flight 60 days in advance.