THE E-NEWSLETTER

The electronic newsletter of the

Academic Senate Committee on Computer Resources

Queensborough Community College, CUNY

November 2001   Mark D. Van Ells, Phil Pecorino, editors

News from the Academic Computing Center
Bruce Naples, Director

The ACC is actively involved in fulfilling the goals of the QCC Technology Plan. Our current focus is on providing an Internet connection in every classroom and non-computer laboratory on campus. Included in this project, is the installation of wireless access points for a Wireless pilot project.

During the summer, and continuing in fall 2001, the ACC has conducted workshops covering various uses of technology including Blackboard, FrontPage, Access, PowerPoint, Excel, Acrobat, and Dreamweaver UltraDev. More than 100 faculty and staff members participated.

Other ACC activities and projects include:

- Providing computer and course-related application software access for students - computer utilization is **currently averaging 200 students per day**, plus 3 fully scheduled classes per week.
- Booking the ACC's Multimedia Center, now a popular place for instructors to bring their classes to introduce them to Web resources. We have had 15 bookings so far this semester.
- Building Academic Web sites - there are currently 14 academic Web sites. With your help, we plan to boost this significantly in the coming year.
- Providing Blackboard (course) Web services - currently 50+ instructors; 100+ courses; 1500+ students

- Hosting seminars - the Physics Department hosted a seminar entitled Project CLEA -- CONTEMPORARY LABORATORY EXPERIENCES IN ASTRONOMY at the ACC on Friday, November 2. There were participants from QCC and six other area colleges.
- Providing liaison for the CUNY Online program – 14 faculty members have signed up, 7 for Fall development and 7 for Spring development – Faculty are developing either Hybrid or Asynchronous online versions of their courses using the Blackboard environment.
- Perkins III VATEA Faculty Development Project – 7 Faculty members are developing in this Fall semester. They each get a small stipend via a Perkins III grant and a loaner laptop from QCC – Faculty members are Web-enhancing their courses using various technologies.
- Working with IT, and other Departments to convert Web sites to the new Web theme/design
- Working with the Academic Senate to develop a QCC Governance Web site
- Working with the Homebound Program to provide technical support for both instructors and homebound students
- Working with Instructional Support Services to create a Web-based application to support tutoring.
- Working with the QCC Art Gallery to create a state of the art gallery database and Web site

Please tell your students to take advantage of our open computer hours (M–Th: 9-9, F: 9-5, S: 10-4

with a few exceptions for scheduled classes). Also, we welcome you to make use of the Faculty Development Center, which has multimedia hardware and software available during those same hours.

Finally, please watch for the next "Workshop Poll" announcement. When it becomes available (on the Web) vote for next semester's workshop topics.

Happy computing,
Bruce Naples

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Update on the Technology Plan
Dr. Howard Lapidus, Chair, Technology Committee

The Technology Plan can broadly be broken down into four categories: campus-wide infrastructure; e-mail services; wireless technology; and other technological projects of the College, including support for the Academic Computing Center, an information technology help desk, the creation of Smart technology centers, College-wide expansion of software licensing, and funding for the technological needs of academic departments. Many goals of the plan have been met, including the reinforcement of the campus infrastructure, the purchase of equipment to support video conferencing protocols, the deployment of tools to identify network problems and protect network equipment from being damaged by power irregularities, and the procurement of a proactive network-wide anti-virus defense system.

The Academic Computing Center has continued to reinforce its infrastructure, enabling it to support additional student computer systems. The ACC has acquired 35 new PCs that support the majority of college curricula, 20 new Macs, supporting the New Media Art and Music curricula, and has added six new printers to the center for work groups and high volume printing.

The Office of Information Technology continues to expand and upgrade e-mail services. In addition to software licenses, anti virus licenses, and network servers that have been purchased to enhance the College e-mail system, adjuncts have currently been added to the College e-mail

system, and by Spring 2002, students will be added to the College mail server.

Also by spring, Queensborough will pilot its first wireless technology course. Slated to begin in February, selected courses in the ET curriculum will be offered in the wireless environment. Wireless access points are being strategically placed across campus providing students enrolled in these courses online access in the classroom, the Library, and other study areas; instructors with laptops or Smart carts will now be able to use Internet resources to teach their classes, regardless of location. In an effort to expand wireless capabilities, the College is currently bidding a contract to add a network jack to every classroom on campus. It is hoped that this pilot project will mark the first of several wireless classes to be offered at Queensborough.

Web-based advisement, which consists of software design and development to complement Web-based registration, will be operational by February 2002.

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News from the Office of Information Technology
George Sherman, Director

Over the past few months the Office of Information Technology (IT) has developed three new PC database applications, reinforced and expanded the Campus Network, secured campus wide software licensing, and continued to support and supplement main frame computer systems such as the Student Information Management System (SIMS).

The Campus Network

IT has continued to progress on its plans to provide a more robust and reliable campus-wide network.

Internet Connection Speed:

IT is working with Verizon on a **New 10 Mbps** (Megabits per second) **campus Internet connection** to replace the existing 1.55 Mbps line. The campus side of this new line is ready. We are waiting for equipment to be installed in the Verizon central office to complete the

connection. When operational, this six-time plus capacity increase will significantly improve campus Internet access speed.

Network Expansion:

The **new network infrastructure in the Technology Building,** designed with the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology, has been installed and configured as an extension of the campus network.

A project to install **a network connection in every classroom** has begun. The specifications for this project were developed with the Academic Computer Center.

The wiring contractor for this project will also install the wiring needed to support a **New Wireless Network in the Library, Technology and Science Buildings** as well as **several outdoor areas**. This wireless network environment will support the Honors Wireless Laptop project.

Network Reliability:

Uninterruptible power supplies (**UPS** - battery backup units) have been installed to protect all major network components from variations and short losses of power. They have proven essential since the Administration and Library Buildings have been running on locally generated power from 6:00 AM to midnight and a select group of equipment on emergency power from midnight to 6:00 AM.

New clustered network servers using a Storage Area Network (SAN) have been installed. Applications will be moved to this high reliability environment as soon as 24-hour power is restored to the Administration Building.

Network Management software has been selected. This will allow monitoring of key network components and detection of problems before they affect network performance

A separate secure **New Student Network** has been created for Wireless Student access.

E-mail

Four hundred **New Adjunct Faculty E-mail accounts** have been created and configured for *Web Outlook* access. They can be accessed by any PC with an Internet connection.

Adjunct CLT E-mail accounts will be available soon.

The proposed E-mail Administrator position for the 9,000 account student E-mail system has been frozen. The project is postponed.

Campus Wide Software Licensing

A block of 1000 licenses for the latest version of Microsoft Office has been purchased.

QCC Web Site

The Office of Information Technology publishes and maintains the Administration section of the QCC Web site. CSTEP and the Queensborough Business Training Center have been added to the Web site. Existing areas such as Academic Affairs, Student Activities, the Box Office and the Registrar have had their web presence significantly expanded and enhanced.

Student Information Management System (SIMS)

IT has responded to specific department requests with the creation of programs, generation of reports, maintenance of hardware and the furnishing of technical support.

Testing and Placement:

The IT Department is involved in planning for a new PC based ACT (COMPASS) testing facility.

Early Warning Letters:

Working with Academic and Student Affairs, a pilot system has been developed to produce Early Warning letters for students identified in the first weeks of a semester as being at risk. The identification form used in the pilot is being redesigned to contain several more key criteria.

Web Based Advisement:

IT is actively working with the Office of Institutional Records, the Registrar and Frank Solutions Inc. on a new Web based Advisement System. IT is currently working on making Degree Audit data available on the Web.

SIMS Upgrades:

The Financial Aid Processing system has been extensively automated and includes the production of notifications of change in student awards.

New fields added for Admissions to support new and revised reports.

IT has worked with the Bursar's Office to update and streamline the process of creating refund checks.

Schedule 25:

Room Scheduling / Utilization software has been installed and a supporting database is being developed with the Registrar's Office.

NEW: Central Receiving Postal Delivery Database System

Created with Central Receiving, this system tracks the flow of packages to the campus and ultimately to departments. It was designed to produce receipts and signoff sheets. The system can provide a complete history of a package's routing.

NEW : GED Database System

This system was designed with the GED Office to track GED students at Queensborough. The system captures data from SIMS and other sources for reports and student mailings.

NEW: College Now Database System

Developed with College Now to track High School students participating in the QCC College Now program. Information is extracted from SIMS to create rosters, reports and student mailings.

QCC Technology Plan:

The Office of Information Technology has been evaluating and selecting equipment and software that meet the needs identified in the QCC Technology Plan.

Help Desk Support

A New Help Desk tool (Altiris Deployment Server) has been installed. With this software a Help Desk Technician can trouble shoot PC problems and install new software remotely.

Help with existing (in-use) hardware, software and/or network connectivity installed and supported by the Office of Information Technology can be reached by dialing **extension 6273**. Problems with equipment or software recommended and installed by the Office of Information Technology personnel will receive the highest priority for resolution.

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Have any Questions?

Feel free to send along any questions you may have concerning the computer resources of the college: maintenance, Technology Plan, email, workshops, etc., to:

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We on the committee shall attempt to obtain answers for you and the QCC community and have them appear in upcoming editions of the newsletter.