

learning environment. The course addresses issues of teaching and learning in an online environment including interaction (with faculty, materials, and peers) and learning styles, instructional strategies, and methodologies for teaching particular levels of objectives and different domains. The course also lets them experience the feel of learning online: the connectedness that can develop from good interaction. Follow on focus workshops address additional issues associated with learning/cognitive styles and online evaluation. As faculty members begin to develop online course materials, they use a rubric to complete a self-assessment of their materials. The rubric guides them through an evaluation of their materials as well as the style in which they will present the materials and interaction during their teaching.

The training and rubric help faculty match presentation of the materials that they develop with their preferred interaction or presentation style taking into consideration student learning styles. Presentation style and course materials are tested at three levels: first, the materials are used to augment the traditional classroom. As material

design and presentation are honed, the faculty move to what we refer to as a reduced seat time course (traditional seat time is traded for web-based learning experiences). Given that the materials and presentation meet the Best Practices in Distance Learning standards set forth by the University of Texas System, including the application of sound online pedagogic practices, the course is taught completely in a web-based environment.

Just as with other courses and programs on campus, various factors are tracked to evaluate a course or program including short-term and long-term outcomes (retention and satisfactory completion, performance in subsequent courses and job placement). Students teaching evaluations are conducted using a standard University form. However, we also complete student opinion surveys for all courses using the course management system. The complete complement of mechanisms provides responses for continued improvement of the course materials and delivery.

Last, but not least, student services are a critical component in the delivery of a quality distance learning program. The Center for Distance

Learning and Teaching Excellence provides online and dial-in helpdesk facilities for students. Students have access to library resources via a proxy server and assistance from a designated online librarian. The University has leveraged consortia relationships with the University of Texas System and a consortium of Hispanic-serving institutions (the Hispanic Educational Telecommunications System: HETS) to provide a broader range of web based information and library resources, homework assistance, as well as advisement and mentoring programs.

During this transformation from traditional to online teaching, faculty members who might already have agility in the use of many of the tools are able to extend their knowledge of application to another realm — one of teaching. They gain knowledge in areas that they have little or no formal training — teaching in higher education. Whether a faculty decides in the end to teach solely online, the process of developing a quality product has a significant positive impact on their traditional instructional methodologies as evidenced in increased retention and students success.

Community College Corner



Update on Two-Year College Activities

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The ACM Two-Year College Education Committee has recently initiated and is currently directing two significant curriculum projects affecting the two-year college (TYC) setting. These two projects appropriately address content areas first identified in the Committee's

1993 curriculum reports by updating instructional topics, pedagogy and strategies, and by linking that content to related undertakings.

The first project provides a major revision to the 1993 Computer Support Services curriculum report. At that time, the report was very forward look-

ing, inasmuch as it established three tracks of study: networking, hardware, and software. The report was part of the newly defined discipline for career-based programs at community colleges. However, the rapid advance of a host of technologies soon outstripped the relevance of the curricu-

lum, leaving it in need of significant revision. With funding from the ACM SIG and Education Boards, the TYC Education Committee was able to constitute a task force effort to address this need. That work concluded with the publication in March 2000, of *Guidelines for Associate-Degree Programs to Support Computing in a Network Environment*, which again features three tracks of study: Networking Services, Internet/Web Services, and User Support Services.

Subsequently, the ATE program of the National Science Foundation funded a proposal to model the implementation of current curricula. This project, *A National Model for Curriculum Adaptation and Implementation*, establishes a framework for implementing the new Networking track guidelines. As part of that initiative, on September 22, 2000, the Committee conducted a very successful live national satellite-based teleconference featuring an expert panel made up of academicians and representatives from industry and professional organizations. This teleconference was a starting point to help provide the necessary resources to two-year college faculty and administrators for the adaptation and implementation of an associate-level networking curriculum. Since that time, the Committee identified a collection of associate-degree granting institutions to model such curricula, awarded seed grants with funding from indus-

try, and established mentoring arrangements. Upon its conclusion, this effort will update or establish a set of model sites for TYC networking programs; it will also provide a model for national implementation of current and relevant curricula.

Another of the 1993 TYC curriculum reports addressed the area of computing sciences. That work is clearly impacted by the upcoming release of the CC2001 report jointly sponsored by ACM and IEEE Computer Society. Therefore, the TYC Education Committee submitted to the ACM Education Board a proposal seeking funding to create a supplement to the ACM/IEEE-CS CC2001 Computer Science Curriculum Report Volume II. This supplement will serve as a curriculum and articulation guide in the area of computer science for the two-year college sector. The ACM and the IEEE Computer Society subsequently funded this proposal. In March 2001, the Committee convened a 24-member Task Force to create a curriculum and articulation guide associated with the ACM/IEEE-CS Computing Curricula 2001 report. The Task Force formulated draft recommendations that were reviewed in April and May by academic and industry professionals. These recommendations will become part of the Computing Curricula report scheduled to be published in September 2001.

In support of these specific projects, as well as the full breadth of the

TYC Education Committee's activities, a web presence is maintained. Individuals interested in participating in any of the work sponsored by the Committee, including review of curricula, are strongly encouraged to visit the website at <www.acmtyc.org> and complete the online database form.

The ACM Two-Year College Education Committee currently consists of:

- ✠ *Karl J. Klee* (Committee Chair)
Professor of Information Technology
Alfred State College, New York
- ✠ *Richard Austing*
University College (Emeritus)
University of Maryland
- ✠ *Robert D. Campbell*
CIO and Executive Dean of IT Services
Rock Valley College
- ✠ *C. Fay Cover*
State and Federal Program Manager
Sun Microsystems Education Services

The TYC Ed Committee pursues numerous avenues to promote the mission of the two-year colleges, to identify and address issues specific to this sector, and to foster collaboration and articulation. We actively seek suggestions and recommendations from all corners and encourage your comments.

Check the **ISTE** website

<www.iste.org>