



TAMU Teaching With Technology Conference — February 23, 2005

Don't miss the opportunity to attend or present at the Teaching With Technology Conference. Faculty presenters will be able to share their knowledge and experiences with colleagues, showcase ideas and contribute to the advancement of technology-mediated instruction at Texas A&M. The due date for proposals is Jan. 28, 2005. Go to: <http://itsinfo.tamu.edu/twtc/> and click on "Call for Proposals" to complete and submit the short information form. Notification of acceptance will be made by Feb. 8, 2005.

The conference is a daylong event that will be held on February 23, 2005 in the Memorial Student Center (MSC). There is no cost to attend; however registration is encouraged. The conference program consists of three concurrent tracks: Innovative Use of Technology, WebCT and Distance Education. For additional information, visit the Web site or e-mail its@tamu.edu

Discover ITS

Technology-mediated instruction is more than just audio and video equipment, pictures, animation and computers. Efficient and effective use of technology-mediated instruction is a process that uses instructional tools to organize and present information for teaching and learning situations.

If considering the use of technology for teaching, let Instructional Technology Services (ITS) be your technology guide. The IT Consultants in ITS can help bridge the gap between the traditional classroom and the enhanced learning experience using technology-mediated instruction. ITS staff has a combined 50 years of experience with on-line course development, instructional design, course management and tools, multimedia development and Web design. ITS services are available to TAMU faculty at no cost.

Instructional Technology Services is centrally located on the TAMU main campus, room 004 Heldenfels Hall. ITS is open Monday through Friday, 8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. For additional information: <http://itsinfo.tamu.edu/>

Last Semester for WebCT Standard Edition

The Spring 2005 semester is the last semester that WebCT Standard Edition (SE) will be available for course use. TAMU began the migration process to WebCT's Enterprise Course Management System, Vista, in January 2003. ITS can provide consultation and tips on moving WebCT SE courses to WebCT Vista.

Online Testing Site

Richard Spiller, Associate Director Open Access Labs, has announced limited availability of the Student Computing Center (SCC) for administering on-line testing for up to 200 students per session. The second floor of the SCC can be reserved Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings after 6:00p.m. for administering on-line tests. Reservations should be made at least a week in advance.

To request a reservation please fill out the form on: http://oalinfo.tamu.edu/tools/clsrn_request/



Enhanced Learning: New Response System a Hit

The College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences has found a winner with the installation of a new, interactive, student response system. With the new Classroom Performance System (CPS), students feel like they are winning (or losing) on a game show every time they attend class. More importantly, the technology fosters a more effective learning environment for both students and instructors, says Associate Professor Dr. Timothy Cudd.

Most instructors know the frustration of asking a question to the entire class and getting a room full of blank stares instead of answers. "When you're teaching difficult concepts and you want to know how effective your presentation was, you can use the system to ask questions to test the student's understanding," explains Cudd. Students use a remote, very similar in size and appearance to a television remote, to enter their answer choice.

Selections are anonymous and the class sees only a graphic representation of the entire class's response. In his own class, Cudd has used the CPS to create a bonus system where students can earn bonus points by answering questions correctly. The CPS, in use at the college for the first time in the fall of 2004, is utilized by all first-, second- and third-year veterinary students. Students and their instructors are discovering the benefits of this new

technology, including a more effective and enjoyable learning environment.

*‡From CVM Today • Texas A&M University • Fall 2004
College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences*

What in the Web are Wikis and Blogs, and What can They do for Me?

You will meet a wiki and a blog and then we will talk about their characteristics and habitat on the Web. After we know these critters a little better, we will explore how they can further the instructional goals we have for ourselves and our students.

At their core, wikis are web pages that any authorized person can change at any time. Wikis allow for a great deal of web-based collaboration and building shared understanding. Blogs are, essentially, web-based journals (or journalistic reports) that anyone can create and any authorized person can comment on in a threaded discussion style. Blogs allow for a person to begin a monograph and have others add their insights and comments, encouraging community and/or preserving social or intellectual bonds (or debate).

Knowing the characteristics and common usages of wikis and blogs allows educators to see where these tools might fit into their repertoire of techniques, find ways to structure assignments and experiences that intensify the educational experience for students, and encourage student learning and growth in ways that foster clear communication, critical thinking, and lifelong learning.

‡Submitted by Dr. Stephen Balfour, College of Liberal Arts

CIS Training Classes

The **CIS Training Center** offers computer classes at no charge for faculty members, teaching assistants and staff using technology in their instruction or development of Texas A&M academic courses. The center offers topics such as HTML, Acrobat, Photoshop, Dreamweaver and FrontPage, in addition to Microsoft Office applications such as PowerPoint and Excel.

The Faculty Training Initiative program began in 2001. Since its beginning, over 350 individuals have participated in training and over 800 classes have been completed on general topics such as web design, graphics, and presentation software, as well as specialty topics like preparing online syllabi and incorporating effective presentation techniques. Feedback on the program is positive, as one faculty commented: "I've struggled to learn software on my own for some time now. These classes greatly increased my confidence and ability to use the software. This was definitely a wise use of my time." Dr. Paul G. Harms, Professor of Animal Science.

For more information:
Please visit the CIS Training Center website
<http://cis.tamu.edu/training/courses.php>
Phone: 979/845-8430
Email: talk-training@tamu.edu

Texas A&M University's 5th Annual Assessment Conference — February 7 - 8, 2005

The 5th Annual Assessment Conference will be held on February 7-8, 2005, at Texas A&M's Memorial Student Center. If you are unfamiliar with Texas A&M's Annual Assessment Conference, there has never been a better time to get involved. As a leader in Texas, the university has a responsibility to prove effectiveness -- a responsibility to students, public, legislature, accrediting association, and our own Vision 2020. More information is available on the website: <http://www.tamu.edu/ode/assessment/>

Annual TTVN Conference — February 23 - 25, 2005

The 9th Texas Trans Videoconference Network Conference will be held on the Texas A&M Campus in Corpus Christi. More information is on the website: <http://ttvn.tamu.edu/Conference/>

TxDLA Annual Conference — Don't Fence Me In: The Distance Learning Frontier! — March 7 - 9, 2005

The Texas Distance Learning Association (TxDLA) is hosting its annual conference at the Renaissance Worthington in downtown Ft. Worth. TxDLA provides distance learning professionals and the organizations they work with the chance to interact and share valuable research, resources and knowledge in a community of professionals. Mark your calendar for this educational event and enjoy the chance to expand your knowledge and network with state and region colleagues and friends. More information is available on the website: <http://www.txdla.org>

7th Annual WebCT User Conference — July 18 - 22, 2005

Share your knowledge of WebCT and technology-mediated instruction by attending IMPACT 2005—The 7th Annual WebCT User Conference in San Francisco, California on July 18-22! The Call for Programs deadline is February 11, 2005. For additional information: <https://programs.regweb.com/go/webctimpact2005/>

New Workshop Offered by Instructional Technology Services

A new workshop has been created to help you with your WebCT course. It is called **Come and Work**. During this two hour workshop, you can bring your materials and questions and work within your own course. You will have a WebCT trainer available to answer your questions and get you started. You will also have the other participants to bounce ideas off of and brainstorm new ideas. For a list of the dates this workshop is available and all the other workshops presented by ITS, go to http://itsinfo.tamu.edu/workshops/workshops_schedule.htm.

WebCT Vista Tip!

Instructors may design courses at the section level or make changes to content during a semester once a section is assigned to a course template. To ensure that content that has changed at the section level is preserved for future use, you must promote the section to a template before the end-of-semester resets. Handouts on promoting a section are available on the ITS website (<http://itsinfo.tamu.edu>).

Office of Distance Education

The Office of Distance Education (ODE) recently relocated from Blocker building to the Donald L. Houston building (also known as the FSIS building) in the Research Park. The move gives the office access to an excellent venue for holding discussions on technology-mediated instruction. The Houston building is located at 200 Discovery Drive, and ODE is found in suite 107.

TAMU Camtasia Studio Offering

Camtasia Studio is a complete solution for creating professional-looking videos of your PC desktop activity. Record and create a full-motion video tutorial or presentation, in real-time, and publish it in the format of your choice. No multimedia or programming experience necessary! Please check the ITS web site for a listing of Camtasia workshop opportunities.

The software package is available to TAMU faculty at no cost through support by the College of Science and the Office of Distance Education. The software can be downloaded from the following website:

<http://s7.stat.tamu.edu/camtasia/>

Faculty are required to login to the site using their NetID and password. Installation instructions and the software license key are emailed following the download.

For additional information on Camtasia Studio, visit the TechSmith® product website.

<http://www.techsmith.com/>



The George Bush School of Government and Public Service

You have students that need your courses offered via the web. You have a great online program idea...but professors are busy. Web-based technologies take time to learn, and course conversions can be tricky. How does a department facilitate the rapid development of a distance education program? At the Bush School, an effective "distributed support" approach is used, where one or more highly trained staff support multiple online faculty and students.

For the past two years, the Distance Education Coordinator at the Bush School has helped with every aspect of online program development, course conversions, distance program planning and grant writing. The skills necessary in this position are web-related (efficient web page development and using online learning tools), instructional design-related (versed in basic and advanced elements of a good online course in this field), and communication-related (able to work with faculty, students, and other staff around the university). A major advantage of an in-house online learning specialist, is that they are familiar both with the department's particular needs and with the most efficient ways of using university resources.

How to pay for distributed support? At the Bush School, an Instructional Enhancement fee is charged for each online course. The fee goes directly back to support the staff and other program development needs.

The distributed model allowed the Bush School online graduate Certificate in Advanced International Affairs to grow from four online courses with about 40 seats to 14 online courses with over 220 seats in just three years. A second certificate in Homeland Security is on track for 2005.

To learn more about the technical support program, contact Nancy Small at n-small@tamu.edu. To learn more about online program development, the Instructional Enhancement Fee, or grant opportunities, contact the Office of Distance Education (<http://www.tamu.edu/ode/>).

Published January 2005

If you received this newsletter from a colleague and would like to be added to the Teaching and Technology Newsletter mailing list, please contact Instructional Technology Services.