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Technology-Curriculum Perspective Presented

Steven Gilbert, Director of Technology Projects at the American Association of Higher Education in Washington, D.C., urged the UMass Boston community to keep asking fundamental questions and be guided by the institution's mission as it moves ahead with campus-wide implementation of new technology resources. "Remember that in thinking about technology we don’t want to forget what we already know about teaching and learning," he continued.

Gilbert spent November 2nd with faculty and staff in a series of meetings and presentations sponsored by the Offices of the Chancellor and the Provost.

Gilbert met with various campus groups, including the Technology Task Force, the Committee to Value and Evaluate Teaching (COVET), the Academic Council, the Faculty Council's Academic Affairs Committee, and executive staff. He responded to many questions, such as how best to provide students with access to computers, how to engage faculty in learning to use new technologies, how to set priorities, and how to pay technology costs.

In his public address, entitled "Information Technology in Higher Education," Gilbert urged reconsideration of four questions at each stage of development:

- "What changes are you looking to make? What do you not want to change? What obstacles are in your way and what can you do about them?"
- "Technology plans need to be in a context, and at UMass Boston, you have a mission that can guide your plans," he continued.

Classroom Assessment Encouraged by Forum

Thomas Angelo, Director of the American Association of Higher Education's Assessment Forum, encouraged UMass Boston faculty at a day-long workshop to translate their classroom goals into strategies for assessing their students learning.

"Assessment is about intention, and how intention translates into teaching and learning," stated Angelo. "Assessment always depends on the questions you ask. It is important for us to know each other's goals, teacher to teacher and teacher to student. This is only a beginning of a conversation, but it is important as a context."

The October 27th workshop was sponsored by the UMass Boston Faculty Council and was attended by approximately 110 faculty and staff from the UMass system as well as Emmanuel College and the Higher Education Coordinating Council (HECC).

As part of Boston's Share-A-Composer Consortium, internationally renowned American composer David Amram is scheduled to appear at UMass Boston on Wednesday, November 29th. Amram has written several forms as well as music for chamber ensembles, orchestras, theater, and cinema. For further information on Amram's appearance please call 287-6900.

Gilbert recommended developing a large and diverse portfolio of technological strategies used at UMass Boston and elsewhere, to guide thinking about pedagogical and strategic choices. "Steve reminds us that there is not just one answer for adopting technology," said Anthony Martin, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. "Technology can be used in as many ways as there are individuals experimenting with it," he continued.

Throughout, Gilbert encouraged us to tailor a technology plan to the needs and goals of our community. "Steve Gilbert brought to UMass Boston a national context for our discussion of technology," remarked Provost Louis Esposito. "He put in perspective that technology is something that can assist us in meeting our own teaching, learning, and service goals."

Nine students from UMass Boston joined twenty-five students from UMass Dartmouth and two students from UMass Amherst to advocate against federal student financial aid cuts in Washington, D.C., on October 23rd through the 25th. During the trip students were able to attend meetings with government officials, such as Senator John Kerry and Congressman Peter Torkildson, which had been arranged by the UMass President's Office.

At present, the ethernet wiring of the campus is scheduled to be completed in December, and plans for two more computer labs and a computer learning center are underway.

Angelo suggested that teachers can help students become more effective learners by involving them in active learning, setting higher expectations and standards, and assessing and providing feedback. He then gave the participants eleven major assessment techniques to help teachers uncover what their students are learning. However, he emphasized that such techniques must be considered in relation to the material being taught and the goals of the instructor, and that not all assessment strategies were right for all disciplines.

"I think the most important thing Tom Angelo did for us was to place assessment in the context of teaching and learning," said Vivian Zamel, Director of the English as a Second Language Program. "He encouraged us to write down techniques we thought were applicable to our work and then jot down how we would use them. It showed that what he was giving us had implications for our teaching."
International Environmental Center Establishing Pollution Strategies

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has awarded a UMass Boston-based consortium a $1 million grant to establish the U.S. Center for Environmental Technology Cooperation. The Center will analyze and propose solutions for air, water and land pollution in less developed nations, particularly in Latin America. The consortium includes UMass Amherst and UMass Lowell. The Center will create a public-private partnership between government, U.S. industry, and academia, linking environmental technology experts, suppliers, and potential consumers. One of its functions will be the development of an electronic information clearinghouse on environmental technology, Envirotech On-Line, which will be accessible on the worldwide web before the end of the year.

"This initiative will enable faculty, students, and staff at our Amherst, Boston, and Lowell campuses to contribute to the important task of solving environmental problems overseas," said UMass President Sherry H. Penney. "It is also consistent with the special mission of UMass to help address public policy issues such as the environment.

"Not only is this the largest grant offered this year by the EPA, but it will initiate substantial involve­ment of both the private and public sectors, includ­ing UMass Boston, towards bringing Environmental Technology into the international marketplace," stated Professor Jack Archer of the Environmental Studies Doctoral Program, principal investigator of the grant.

"Sustainable Boston" Promotes Local Forums

UMass Boston's Urban Harbor Institute, in collabora­tion with other environmental organizations and the offices of Mayor Thomas Menino and Senator John Kerry, has established a process that will encourage neighborhood forums on environmental issues and the quality of life in metropolitan Boston. Three hundred and fifty citizens, environmentalists, students and government officials representing the "neighborhood" of metropolitan Boston, participated in comparable planning forums at Sustainable Boston, a conference held at the UMass Boston campus on October 28th.

Conference participants attended separate sessions on economic development and the urban environment: youth, education and lifelong learning; urban infrastructure and public safety; environmental justice; preservation and neighborhood revitaliza­tion; and the urban environment and the quality of life.

Faculty and staff of UMass will provide the core leadership for the Center's development, obtaining electronic information sources and conducting export training for U.S. technology product and service firms. The Toxic Reduction Institute of UMass Lowell will conduct national technology demonstrations and training programs. The Applied Systems Computing Institute of Massachusetts at UMass Amherst will manage the Center's on-line information system.

"We are currently organizing the Center and hiring an executive director," explained Archer. "I hope that we will be fully functioning in the next couple of weeks. By next year the Center's office will be in Washington D.C., but for now we are managed from Boston."

The initial focus of the Center will be Mexico. According to Archer, "Mexico has significant environmental problems. Our Center will use a variety of means to bring U.S. government repre­sentatives and university experts to work with Mexican officials to identify environmental problems and put together a team of officials who can assist them."

One of the main focuses in Mexico will concern waste prevention. "This will deal with ways to minimize the production of pollution in industrial and manufacturing processes, in an attempt to reduce the level of pollution," explained Archer.

"Our work will join two goals," continued Archer. "First, there is the responsibility of protecting the environment, which includes environmental manage­ment and conservation. Second, we must insure economic development."

The Center is currently organizing a series of regional technology forums to exchange information, educate and establish contacts with members of the environmental business community, including state, trade, economic and environmental organizations. These meetings are scheduled to begin next year in Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Dallas.

Since 1993, the UMass system has worked to become a recognized leader in the environmental technology and management field at the state, regional, and international levels. "The University has substantial strengths in environmental sciences, management, and technology," said Archer. "The task has been to integrate programs and people on four campuses in a University-wide effort. We are the only university that has received this strong an endorsement by the EPA."

The sessions consisted of workshops, case studies, and panel discussions. Richard Delaney, Director of the Urban Harbors Institute, presented an overview of the urban environment. Jack Wiggins, the Institute's Assistant Director, was a panelist on promoting sustainable communities through formal education. "The common thread found throughout the topics of the conference was the quality of life today and the work that we can do to assure that future generations will be guaranteed the same level of resources," said Delaney. "Those are the bases of a sustainable community."

"During each workshop there was a note-taker," said Madeleine Walsh, the Institute's Education Coordinator and organizer of the conference. "We will be putting together these results and then apply them to individual neighborhoods. A forum will then be held in each neighborhood to create a framework for further activity by the Mayor's Office of Environ­mental Services."

Professor Monica McAlpin, Director of the Honors Program, has announced the opening of the Honors Lounge in the McCormack Building. The lounge is open for honors students and their guests from 9:30-5:00 pm during the week. "The lounge is vital to the Honors Program. National standards show that when students have a place where they can meet informally, this helps to spur their intellectual growth," explains McAlpin. Present Lou Esposito, Dean of Arts and Sciences Resource Donahue, and Materials Manager Frederick Fall of the Procurement Department provided support for opening the lounge.

Attention Readers

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