

Earlier this year, a survey of EDUCAUSE members identified IT-related faculty development, support, and training as one of the top two issues of importance for the strategic success of their institutions; survey results also revealed that respondents were spending a significant amount of their time on IT strategic planning. Several articles in this issue of *EQ* share experiences related to these challenges or suggest new ways to think about them.

As technology-enhanced teaching and learning becomes more widespread on many campuses, IT professionals are increasingly expected to provide systematic support and training programs for faculty. For such programs to be successful, faculty need to be engaged and motivated, embracing the idea that technology can, indeed, enhance—even transform—education. This is far more likely to occur when institutional strategies for technology-enhanced teaching and learning have been clearly articulated and widely accepted. But what are the motivating factors for colleges and universities to develop such strategies?

Because of its proximity to such high-tech firms as MCI WorldCom, AOL, and Oracle, George Mason University found significant external motivation to launch an initiative that would ensure that its liberal arts graduates would have a high degree of fluency in information technology. The Technology Across the Curriculum (TAC) program, an ongoing collaborative effort between the College of Arts and Sciences and the Division of Instructional Improvement and Instructional Technologies, is based on a core of ten technology goals, developed with faculty consensus, which provides a framework for the systematic integration of technology skills across degree programs. Authors Anne Agee and Dee Ann Holisky share five factors that have con-

tributed to the success of the TAC program at George Mason.

Viewpoint author Todd Kelley explores other factors that should motivate liberal arts colleges and universities to make IT an integral part of their academic programs and to ensure information-literate communities. If your institution hasn't yet articulated a strategic vision for information technology, you may find this viewpoint a valuable tool to help make the case on your campus that the future of liberal arts education is tied directly to the strategic use of IT.

In a related viewpoint, author Carol MacKnight promotes the use of online discussions to support the teaching of critical thinking, an objective of many disciplines and a goal that MacKnight says most faculty can aspire to. This article is another one that you might share with faculty, instructional technologists, and others on your campus as they explore ways to enhance teaching and learning with technology.

A couple of years ago, Marty Ringle and Dan Updegrove asked in an award-winning *CAUSE/EFFECT* article, "Is strategic planning for technology an oxymoron?" What kind of IT planning makes sense in times of rapidly changing technologies? Can IT planning move forward in the absence of the articulation and acceptance of institutional goals and strategies for IT? How can the IT planning process be integrated into the academic planning processes so that the allocation and use of resources are mutually supportive? You'll find the answers to these and other questions in author Jack McCredie's excellent set of recommendations and insights for IT planners—lessons he has learned through his many years as an IT leader and more recently through a successful planning experience at the University of California Berkeley.

Julia A. Rudy, Editor

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At Austin Community College, information technology is used to leverage existing resources, develop solutions, and enhance already strong academic offerings.

On the cover:

Austin Community College provides education for a diverse community in a booming, high-tech metropolitan area.

Cover photograph and photograph above:
George Smith

6 Technology Across the Curriculum at George Mason University

Liberal arts graduates will be technology fluent, thanks to a creative partnership between a university IT division and the College of Arts and Sciences
by Anne Scrivener Agee and Dee Ann Holisky

14 Planning for IT in Higher Education: It's Not an Oxymoron

Colleges and universities need creative thinkers and planners at all levels to develop winning strategies to remain competitive
by John W. McCredie

22 Internet Videoconferencing: Coming to Your Campus Soon!

High-quality, full-screen, full-motion Internet videoconferencing is now within reach for most colleges and universities
by Robert S. Dixon

28 Applying Corporate Knowledge Management Practices in Higher Education

Colleges and universities have significant opportunities to apply knowledge management practices to support every part of their mission
by Jillinda J. Kidwell, Karen Vander Linde, and Sandra L. Johnson

CAMPUS
PROFILE



34 Building Partnerships for a 21st-Century Community College

Austin Community College plans, prioritizes, and delivers through the effective use of information technology
by Nancy Flynn

CURRENT ISSUES

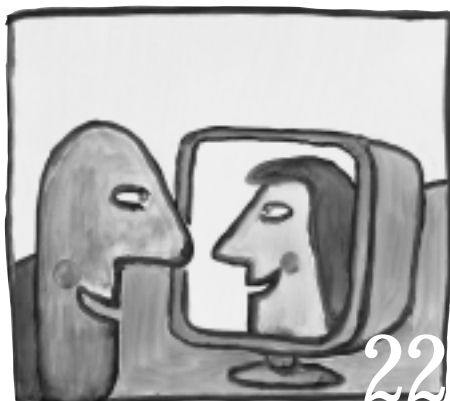
4 Developing Strategies for Affordable Bandwidth

What can your institution do to develop a good partnership with a broadband vendor to negotiate affordable pricing for increased bandwidth?
by the Net@EDU Broadband Pricing Working Group

GOOD IDEAS

50 Technology-Enhanced Learning and Community with Market Appeal

Why the University of Dayton's Personalized Virtual Room is attractive to students, parents, faculty, and staff
by Brian Alexander Young



VIEWPOINTS

38 Teaching Critical Thinking through Online Discussions

Faculty can play a key role in fostering critical thinking among students using Web communication tools
by Carol B. MacKnight

42 Liberal Arts Education and Information Technology: Time for Another Renewal

Liberal arts colleges must accommodate the powerful changes that are taking place in the way people communicate and learn
by Todd D. Kelley

47 Lessons for Higher Education from the Dot Coms

Can higher education learn from the Internet successes and failures of the corporate sector?
by Chris Brezil

DEPARTMENTS

2 From the Editor ■ 54 Recommended Reading
56 Index