



# UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY

State University of New York

# ITS News

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

## ITS Showcase

### Online Degree Program Recognized by NYSED

The New York State Education Department's Distance Higher Education Initiative has selected the School of Education's part-time online M.S. program in Reading as an illustrative example of a quality online degree program. Selection was based on the Reading program's academic quality and success in meeting workforce needs throughout the state. The program was recently featured in the Distance Learning segment of the Regents Policy Conference, which took place in September.

The Reading Department launched its online MS program in the Fall 2000 semester. The program now serves a large and diverse population of about 200 students who, because of time constraints and distance, find it difficult or impossible to come to the University at Albany campus. The online Reading program uses the same faculty and curricula as its on-campus counterpart. Admission is open to teachers with prior certification in any grade-level or field. To date, 55 students have earned their MS in Reading in the online program.

Faculty teach the courses online using the SUNY Learning Network (SLN), the State University of New York's award-winning online education program. In fact, the School of Education was the first to offer a fully online master's degree on SLN. Of the five online master's programs offered through SLN, the School of Education runs two – the M.S. in Reading and the M.S. in Curriculum Development and Instructional Technology.

The University at Albany was also one of the first campuses to undergo and pass the Distance Higher Education Initiative's Institutional Capability Review process and has been authorized to provide online and distance education programs as part of its Middle States accreditation.

For more information on the University at Albany's online degree programs visit the Online & Distance Learning website at [www.albany.edu/its/extended\\_learning](http://www.albany.edu/its/extended_learning).



Christine E. Haile

## From the Desk of the CIO...

Welcome to the first edition of *ITS News*! This publication was designed to provide the UAlbany community with news about information technology services available on campus, the different ways technology is being used at the University, and illustrate how ITS can assist with your technology needs. It also provides a forum for sharing our ideas and goals for continuous improvements to technology on campus and the challenges that brings. I am happy to report several updates in this inaugural issue.

The fall semester opening was one of the most challenging ever for ITS, given the outbreak of the Blaster and Welchia (a.k.a. Nachi or Nachi-A) worms. Knowing that the spread of worms and viruses could disrupt business and damage student and campus-owned computers, ITS staff put together an aggressive program to ensure that machines were properly patched and to reduce the likelihood that infected machines would get connected to the campus network.

An ITS team consisting of Don Gallerie, Marty Manjak, Rob See, Trevor Corbett, Eric Torgersen and Will Platnick implemented a range of solutions to protect the network and block incoming viruses. When students returned to campus and registered their computers on Resnet, the machines were automatically scanned. If problems were found, links to downloading patches were provided. Only "clean" machines were allowed to connect to Resnet. This comprehensive program enabled the semester to begin without any appreciable network downtime and prevented a major virus/worm outbreak. Other campuses were not so fortunate and spent days, sometimes weeks, cleaning up

the damage. A round of applause and a big thank you to the team.

Our first semester with MyUAlbany in place was a highly successful one. Coincident with the new student information system that replaced SIRS, these new systems offer self-service access to numerous University transactions in a secure, web-based environment. Stay tuned for the conversion of more services to a web-based format during the academic year. See Page 3 for more details about the successful rollout of PeopleSoft and MyUAlbany.

Smart Classrooms have also been high on our list of priorities. We expect to add another seven rooms by the conclusion of Spring 2004. All podiums are equipped with PCs, Internet access, CD-rom and DVD drives; many have document cameras. Smart Classrooms are located across all three campuses and are just one way ITS meets the changing technology needs of the UAlbany community.

One of my goals as Chief Information Officer is the continuous improvement of IT services, programs and facilities. I hope this newsletter assists in familiarizing you with all our organization has to offer. And I'm interested in your thoughts: if you have comments about how this publication could be made more useful, or suggestions about ways that ITS could better serve the University community, please email me at [CIO@albany.edu](mailto:CIO@albany.edu).

Enjoy!

*Christine E. Haile*

Christine E. Haile,  
Chief Information Officer

## Strategic Planning Charts the Future of IT at UAlbany

While the presence of technology at UAlbany is nothing new, there have been many changes in the structure and service delivery of information technology services on campus over the past two years. In September 2001, Christine E. Haile joined the University as Chief Information Officer, assuming responsibility for several technology-based groups, as well as the overall IT environment and infrastructure for the campus. Our CIO recognized that in order to create and manage a successful IT environment, a strategic planning process was needed to drive goals and inform decision-making.

Over the past year, ITS completed a three-step process of information gathering, developed a vision statement, and created sets of planning principles and organizational goals. The first three steps included creating an Advisory Board to inform the plan in its earliest stages; an extensive review of the IT environment at peer and aspirational peer institutions to see how UAlbany compared; and a series of stakeholder workshops designed to elicit feedback from users about their expectations for IT at the University. The information gathered in these exercises provided a solid planning foundation and informed the preparation of the ITS vision statement, which is as follows:

**The University at Albany offers a sophisticated IT environment that advances enriched learning experiences, excellence in teaching, service, and distinguished research programs commensurate with its status as a nationally recognized public university.**

As a companion piece to the vision statement, ITS then turned its attention to the creation of a set of guiding principles for the planning framework. It was agreed that the process must encompass seven key components: it should be mission focused; have measurable goals and objectives; it must be entrepreneurial, evolutionary and action-oriented; and based on broad, informed participation and open communication. All planning activities are designed to incorporate these principles.

While the planning principles provided guidelines for the larger framework, a set of specific objectives were needed to direct focus and activities within the organization. With an eye on the strategic goals of the campus, ITS advanced a set of complementary goals designed to identify priority programs and services, assess new technologies and chart the course for the future of IT at UAlbany:

**GOAL 1:** Provide infrastructure to enable anytime/anywhere access to information;

**GOAL 2:** Create learning environments that foster engagement, creativity and collaboration;

**GOAL 3:** Support research and scholarly activities that promote innovation, discovery and the dissemination of new knowledge;

**GOAL 4:** Empower users with the knowledge, tools and support to effectively communicate and use information;

**GOAL 5:** Provide integrated information systems that support campus management;

**GOAL 6:** Provide a secure IT environment that protects the University's critical assets and users' privacy;

**GOAL 7:** Serve as a catalyst for adopting new technologies.

Following the creation of these goals, ITS put an initial three-year plan (from 2003-04 through 2005-06) into action. For 2003-2004, there are more than forty projects ITS hopes to address during the remainder of this fiscal year; the table below provides a sample of these activities and how they each relate to one of the seven ITS goals.

**GOAL 1:** Provide infrastructure to enable anytime/anywhere access to information. *Implement DHCP; address file storage capacity.*

**GOAL 2:** Create learning environments that foster engagement, creativity and collaboration. *Plan for new Smart Classrooms and spaces; work with the Library to implement their new system.*

**GOAL 3:** Support research and scholarly activities that promote innovation, discovery and the dissemination of new knowledge. *Develop core services to support campus-based research interests.*

**GOAL 4:** Empower users with the knowledge, tools and support to effectively communicate and use information. *Develop ITS policies; consolidate and improve HelpDesk services.*

**GOAL 5:** Provide integrated information systems that support campus management. *Implementation of MyUAlbany; prepare for January 2004 implementation of web-based financial aid system*

**GOAL 6:** Provide a secure IT environment that protects the University's critical assets and users; privacy. *Continue Net ID project; hire University Information Security Officer*

**GOAL 7:** Serve as a catalyst for adopting new technologies. *Assessment of Linux, e-signature and Voice over IP technologies.*

One of the benefits of planning is ITS units working more closely with one another, as well as with other campus groups. This three-year cycle will be updated annually and integrated with budget planning.

Everyone at UAlbany is a stakeholder in ITS and has an interest in its future. As the planning process is an open, iterative one, new ideas are welcome. If you have comments on the ITS strategic plan or would like to offer suggestions on how we might improve the process or programs and services, please contact us via email at CIO@albany.edu.

## myUALBANY is Here

As technology has advanced, student enrollments have increased and the demand for more sophisticated record-keeping systems and procedures has grown, the University at Albany began making preparations for the largest technology-based undertaking the campus has seen since the implementation of the outgoing student records system.

After seven years of planning and testing, MyUALbany, powered by PeopleSoft, became a reality on June 16, 2003, when the University's first web-based system was activated, giving University at Albany students, faculty and staff access to student records and course information via the internet.

MyUALbany has given students the same capabilities as the outgoing, touch-tone Voice Response Registration system (VRR) and much more, allowing them access to their UALbany records from anywhere in the world that has access to the World Wide Web. In addition to being able to register for classes and make program adjustments with the new self-service system students can also view their academic records, check for administrative holds and update their personal information, all with the ease of a few clicks of a mouse.

UALbany faculty and staff are also enjoying the benefits of this new system that has streamlined their day-to-day administrative procedures. Faculty are able to view and print updated class rosters and input their end of semester final grades using MyUALbany. In addition to having access to student and course information University faculty and staff also have access to their employment records and history and can report time and attendance usage.

These amenities are just the beginning of what students and staff can expect from MyUALbany. This spring, the University has plans to convert the student financial and financial aid records to PeopleSoft, allowing for paperless financial aid management, making available to students comprehensive student financial status and account histories, and giving students the



ITS celebrates the successful rollout of PeopleSoft and MyUALbany

ability to accept financial aid awards via the web. The University also hopes to provide students with an online payment processing option, which would allow them to pay their UALbany invoices via the web using payment methods such as credit cards. In addition to saving time, these upcoming features will likely ease the long lines that plague the Financial Aid and Bursar office service counters at the beginning of each semester.

As the University wraps up its first full semester of using MyUALbany, it has recorded several milestones. At the end of final examinations, it was reported that approximately 900 teaching faculty successfully submitted their final grades entirely on the web. Additionally, in preparation for the spring semester, PeopleSoft was used by the Registrar's Office's scheduling unit to assist with the creation of the spring schedule of classes and by the Degree Clearance unit to process degree applications for December 2003 degree candidates. It is hoped that also in the near future students will have the ability to submit their degree applications online.

As the implementation process continues and new user-friendly features are added regularly, the future with MyUALbany looks bright for students, faculty and staff at the University at Albany.

### MYUALBANY FAST FACTS

- DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS, APPROXIMATELY 3,729,171 RECORDS WERE CONVERTED FROM SIRS TO PEOPLESOFT.
- DURING THE 1ST WEEK OF CLASSES FOR THE FALL 2003 SEMESTER THE MYUALBANY LOGIN PAGE RECEIVED ALMOST 71,500 HITS.

## Services for Faculty/ Staff WebBuilders

The Web Support & Services Group, a part of University Applications Development assists web-builders with a variety of web support issues. Check the new ITS web site for details. See [www.albany.edu/its/web/forms.html](http://www.albany.edu/its/web/forms.html) for a list of forms to request services.

### ■ WEB ADMINISTRATION

Many offices and departments may find that they have a new webmaster or need to add or remove someone to/from the group that has write access privileges to their website. To get the fastest service, use the new web site administration form at: [www.albany.edu/its/web/request\\_admin.html](http://www.albany.edu/its/web/request_admin.html).

### ■ A NEW UNIVERSITY SEARCH

In the past year, we have added new search facilities. The main University search now includes multiple University and departmental servers. Previously, departments who hosted their own servers (e.g. Computer Science, and CTG) were not included in the main University search. If you have a new server or your server was not already included and would like it included in the search, send email to [webmaster@albany.edu](mailto:webmaster@albany.edu). Be sure to include the full name of the server and the associated department, service, or office.

### ■ ADDING A SEARCH TO YOUR SITE

Administrative offices, academic departments and research centers can now add a search to their UALbany web site without intervention from the Web Support and Services staff. You can set up a search that is restricted to the web sites you choose, combining different departments and excluding sections of your site that you don't want searched. For instructions on setting up your search, go to our website at: [www.albany.edu/its/web/search/](http://www.albany.edu/its/web/search/).

### ■ STARTING A NEW WEB SITE

If you are planning to build a new web site and need disk space, please see our web space guidelines at: [www.albany.edu/its/web/space\\_guide.html](http://www.albany.edu/its/web/space_guide.html) for instructions. Faculty should consult with CETL about their web needs. Administrative offices, research centers, and academic departments and programs may request web space directly from Web Support & Services. Please use the form at: [www.albany.edu/its/web/request\\_space.html](http://www.albany.edu/its/web/request_space.html).

### ■ REQUESTING HELP

The ITS helpdesk can help you with many web related questions. They are your first stop for help. Contact them at (518) 442-3700. Walk-in to LC-27 or send them your questions using the form at: [www.albany.edu/its/help/help-request.html](http://www.albany.edu/its/help/help-request.html).

If you have more complicated questions or need help getting started with our [www.albany.edu](http://www.albany.edu) server, we are here to assist you. Make a consultation request at: [www.albany.edu/its/web/consultation.html](http://www.albany.edu/its/web/consultation.html).

## Smart Spaces: Enhancing the Teaching & Learning Experience at Albany



Electronic classrooms are designed to provide a complete hands-on experience. Individual monitors for each student are complemented by a smart podium, which allows faculty to use a variety of teaching tools for a rich teaching and learning environment.

By now most people on campus have probably had the opportunity to attend a class, meeting, or use a computer lab in one of the University's renovated Smart Spaces. While the much-needed facelifts have made these spaces significantly more attractive, the upgrades have also created environments which are more conducive to learning with better lighting, more comfortable seating, and larger writing surfaces while at the same time providing faculty with state-of-the-art equipment and the ability to better incorporate technology into the classroom.

The first smart classrooms, built in 1999 as part of a three-year, \$3.6 million grant from New York State, were designed to serve as models for ongoing classroom upgrades. One goal of this initiative was to establish a com-



mon standard allowing for the presentation of all types of media, including high-resolution computer display and to integrate the equipment with an easy-to-use media control system. With the completion of the classroom renovations in the Humanities Building this summer, meeting rooms and computer user labs have increased to some 40 Smart Spaces across the three University campuses.

Not all of these high-tech classrooms are identical; there are differences in the equipment that is available and faculty should assess their needs in order to procure a room compatible with their technology needs. All rooms are outfitted with an LCD projector, VCR, sound system, a computer with a network connection and a projection screen. Others are also equipped with full media control

panels, DVD players and document cameras. While most people are familiar with the teaching enhancements provided by a computer or VCR, the document camera may not share this level of recognition. This tool allows an item to be imaged on a projector screen and has a zoom lens, enabling a close-up view. It also has a feature which allows the user to "freeze" the image on the screen even after the object has been removed from view. The document camera allows users to present detailed views of items to a room filled with spectators.

Assistance and training for use in the Smart Classrooms is provided by the ITS' Facilities Group managed by Pete Connolly. Services are divided into operational and technical responsibilities. Joe Bent manages operations, assuring that all facilities are functioning properly on a day-to-day basis. Dave Long is the A/V Director, and the technical responsibilities. Departments, schools and colleges can request a presentation to better familiarize faculty with the facilities and equipment or schedule an individual appointment.

**For additional information on Smart Classroom services, or to request assistance, please contact the Audio/Visual office at 442-3647 or the Help Desk at 442-3700. You can also email [smartclass@albany.edu](mailto:smartclass@albany.edu).**



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