

Areté



TEACHING & LEARNING EDITION

WWW.AMERICAN.EDU/CTE/

SPRING 2006

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

How we take stock of ourselves in CTE And how we hope to do it better

Long before assessment became a buzzword in higher education, measurement of systems and social phenomena interested me. A computer model of Lake Erie I helped develop focused on an aggregate index of ecosystem health. A global south agricultural performance model incorporated a nutrition index. My most recent work uses measures of 'violent political conflict' and 'state sanctioned violence' to assess a range of human development and internal security policies.

Thus, it is probably not surprising that 'performance measurement' became a priority for the reorganized CTE. Among questions to which we sought answers were these: What services are we delivering, to what faculty and student clients, with what results? Are these services the ones that are needed? Are we using our resources of space, staff and capital equipment cost-effectively?

Creating an institutional culture where performance management is embraced takes time whether the organization is the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the International Monetary Fund or CTE. CTE's database now comprises thirty-seven indicators. Managers are accountable for commenting on their units' performance, using these indicators as a point of reference, each month. Trends are highlighted, problems are identified and, where necessary, corrective measures are implemented.

Some noteworthy trends were highlighted in CTE's 2004-2005 Annual Report. Growth in Blackboard utilization to 83 percent of courses offered in Spring 2005 is a widely publicized indicator because (then) Provost Kerwin had set 75 percent utilization as an AU goal. Contrasted with Academic Year 2004, utilization of CTE's statistical laboratories grew by 39 percent (as measured by seat-hour counts) in 2005. New Media Center utilization grew by 44 percent. Faculty Corner utilization grew by 85 percent. Contacts in CTE training and networking events for faculty grew by 150 percent. More than 120 colleagues participated in our Adjunct Faculty Orientations, which were first initiated in January 2004. Our newly created AV database detailed services to over 10,000 class meetings and 376 special events in the month of September alone.

Growth trends and high service volumes are encouraging. They picture growing demand for CTE services. High demand may be a rough index of 'user satisfaction' but we know that performance assessment in CTE must rise to the next level in at least three areas. First, we need 'benchmarking' metrics so that we can assess our performance relative to some agreed upon standard of what it ought to be. Second, we must develop more refined measures of user satisfaction, especially for faculty users. We must benchmark those measures, as well. Third, we must assess how the variety of features Blackboard provides are being utilized. A project headed by Dr. Kelly Nolin, newly designated as CTE's Manager of Training, Performance Management and Assessment is addressing many of these issues. We welcome your ideas and your feedback.

John Richardson

cte quick facts

SMALL GRANTS FOR TEACHING

Contact Alaina Ledden
[x2305; ledden@american.edu]

LAPTOP, PROJECTOR, CAMERAS & IPOD LOANS

Contact the Faculty Corner [x2734]

ENHANCE YOUR SOFTWARE SKILLS

Contact Kelly Nolin for specialized training
[x6077; nolin@american.edu]

WE ARE YOUR BLACKBOARD RESOURCE

Contact Jim McCabe
[x2553; jmccabe@american.edu]

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH ASSISTANCE

Contact Assen Assenov
[x3681; assenov@american.edu]

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & MENTORING

Contact John Richardson
[x2346; rich@american.edu]

WEB INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE

Contact James Lee
[x2285; jlee@american.edu]

MULTIMEDIA, GRAPHICS & VIDEO EDITING

Contact Justin Schauble
[x2797; jschauble@american.edu]

CLASSROOM A/V NEEDS

Contact the Audio/Visual Services Group
[x2296 or av@american.edu]

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Areté is often equated, seamlessly, with the English terms 'virtue,' 'excellence,' 'goodness,' and 'knowledge.' It embodies a belief that "the highest human potential is knowledge and all other human abilities are derived from this central capacity."

Greenberg Seminarists Head for Classroom in Their 3rd Year

BY JOHN DOOLITTLE

The philosophy that “teaching should be just as prized as research” is the mantra laid down by former AU Provost and Interim President Milton Greenberg when the seminars bearing his name were inaugurated on campus in 1993. Dr. Milton Greenberg helped kick off this year’s seminar series by giving a keynote address in which he emphasized some realities of campus life facing new professors. Included in his ‘realities’ were that most graduates will be teaching at places other than Yale or Harvard and that the academic calendar is grounded in the agrarian past rather than contemporary lifestyles. Through the Greenberg Seminars, over 60 PhD and Masters Candidates will come together to learn from faculty and one another about these realities and much more.

Faculty members conducting the seminars have designed all-day sessions for students in their first and second years of the program. The second year cohort will focus on the mechanics of course design beginning with the syllabus. Once the concepts behind the course are clear, the group’s faculty, Patrick Jackson and Marianne Noble will discuss how to effectively utilize the physical space of the classroom, and how these decisions relate to the specific course goals. Spring semester will be devoted to uses of technology and the staging of mock class sessions.

Eleven students are beginning their third year of the seminars and will be preparing during the fall to teach a semester-long undergraduate class in the spring. The goal of having every third-year Greenberg student take charge of their own course is making the faculty, Professors Cathy Schaeff and Alan Kraut, scramble to ensure the units have open courses. Fortunately, several deans support the concept and are likely to smooth the way for unit chairs and directors to find appropriate assignments.

All Greenberg faculty members will be sharing the responsibility of mentoring the third year students during the spring. The mentoring will involve classroom visits from faculty combined with peer evaluation should ensure the graduate teachers have an enlightened teaching experience.

Although this will not be the first time the Greenberg students will be given a real class to teach, it could well be the inauguration of a regular effort to make the opportunity available to every student completing his or her third year of the program. The faculty teaching the seminars are excited by the prospect and students have responded enthusiastically to this new structure.

Beyond Pizza: Using Your Small Grants to Enhance Teaching

BY ALAINA LEDDEN

If you don’t know what a Small Grant is, you’re missing out on a University resource that can have a positive effect on classroom teaching. A Small Grant is given to a professor who is teaching in that particular semester in the amount of \$100. These Grants can be used for anything that can enhance the classroom experience for either the Professor or the students. Past items have included pizza for an end of the semester study session, tickets for Othello or subsidizing the purchase of an iPod for recording and posting class lectures on Blackboard .

CTE’s first Director, Professor Jack Child, introduced Small Grants in response to a survey asking faculty about possible Center programs. The survey responses showed Professors wanted to eliminate ‘red-tape’ when they sought small amounts of funds to experiment with teaching innovations and ways of getting students more involved. The program has consistently grown at about 17% per year and receives more favorable comments from faculty members than any other CTE initiative.

Some community members have the impression that Small Grants, for the most part, go to buying pizza. Since the beginning Fall 2005, the majority of the grants, nearly 40%, have gone toward book and class materials intended to further a faculty member’s knowledge in one particular area or to provide his or her class with additional reading materials. Food purchases only account to approximately 8% of Small Grants use. The second largest group of items that Small Grants fund is office supplies, often technology-related. This includes blank CD/DVDs, mini DVs, VHS tapes and partial funding of printers.

Interesting and creative ways of utilizing this funding often presented themselves. Some professors, if they know they will be teaching both semesters, combine their Small Grants to purchase more costly items, for example an iPod plus lapel microphone and recording adaptor to facilitate lecture podcasting. With the growth of podcasting on campus and recent CTE events highlighting its use, Small Grants help reduce the cost to the professor for this quite costly teaching tool.

Each spring, tBiology Professor Kiho Kim takes his class to Florida to explore and photograph the coastal marine life. Though the Small Grants program cannot nearly fund this trip, it did help buy waterproof camera casings allowing students to take underwater photographs.

Feel free to continue buying pizza for your students, they definitely appreciate it. But explore other ideas on how to use this resource in your classroom. If you have any questions or would like to propose a unique use of your Grant, please don’t hesitate to contact me at x2305 or via email at ledden@american.edu.

Video Conferencing in the Classroom

BY JIM LEE

Over the summer, CTE purchased video-conferencing (VC) equipment in order to provide faculty with an easy way to integrate internet protocol connection (IP) VC into their classroom. Until recently AU's main campus was limited to an auditorium sized space for video-conferencing which is often impractical for an average size class. Our unit is portable throughout second floor of Hurst Hall.

This semester we are pilot-testing the equipment with guest lectures, classes speaking with other non-American University classes and outside groups from the Washington area looking to utilize this technology.

Two models for video conferencing are permitted by the technology and have been used this semester. Using the "one to many" model, a professor might lecture to a group at another university. In this case the VC unit is set up in a small office or conference room allowing the professor privacy and a lack of interruptions. Using the "many to many" model, two classes might interact on a common project, or two sites might participate in a conference. The SSRL has recently has been refitted for video conferencing and provides users the ability to follow the lecture online using the computers in the lab.

Testing this equipment for more general use in the spring has provided us with a number of diverse, and so far error-free, video events. Some examples are as follows:

- Professor Leslie Gill from Anthropology gave a lecture to a class from Duke University
- The Washington State Democratic Party
- CTE sponsored a Social Science Research Seminar where speakers from AU (Professor Joyce Francis of SIS) and George Washington University (Dr. Yianna Vovides broadcasting from GWU) illustrated the use of only web-building packages applied to distance learning. Web sites for both presentations were also made available.
- With the help of the Law School, Rheinhard Heinisch gave a lecture to students in SIS professor Michelle Egan's European Politics class.
- Professor Pat Aufderheide from SOC had an interview with a professor from Australia. The interview was recorded and replayed in his class later in the day. (Time does matter!)

Video conferencing can add a lot to a class, from research to savingtvv money on travel. For more information or to schedule an event contact Jim Lee at x2285 or jlee@american.edu.

Data Analysis Made Easy at the Social Science Research Laboratory

BY ASSEN ASSENOV

The Social Science Research Lab (SSRL) has always been a great place to have your students conduct in-depth studies in almost any field of social science with the most useful statistical analysis packages. The staff is prepared to assist you or your students with any number of data or software questions, and if they don't have the answer, they probably know someone who does. This creates an atmosphere where students learn, professors teach and the greater community learns how to effectively use social science data.

As part of our faculty and student quantitative research support, the lab hosts statistical software tutorials and consultations for undergraduate and graduate students. Typically, the tutorials for undergraduate students consist of three parts. The first and second parts of this process include the student constructing and conducting a small survey for their classmates. This is followed by the student entering and coding the collected information into the appropriate statistical software. Once the data is collected, statistical exploration begins. This stage provides students with hands-on experience in statistical description, graphical representation of the survey data and testing statistical hypotheses.

The last part of the tutorial utilizes the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). ICPSR uses a wide variety of data sets to demonstrate the advantages of large data sets while using some statistical inference techniques. This approach to statistical software tutorials has the following advantages. It:

1. Puts quantitative research into a real-world context.
2. Allows students to actively participate in collecting data during the class and keep them engaged.
3. Provides students with hands-on-experience in conducting surveys and analyzing data.
4. Exposes students to a full range of government and non-government data sources.
5. Familiarizes students with an array of software supported by the SSRL and establishes personal tconnections between students and lab consultants.

This approach to learning statistical software invites faculty and students to return to the lab for data resources.

To request a tutorial on any of the SSRL's statistical software packages--including SAS, SPSS, STATA, EViews—or to request a demonstration on how to use the ICPSR data sets, please stop by Hurst Hall, room 203 or contact the Social Science Research Lab at x3862. We'll be happy to answer your questions, schedule a class tutorial, or reserve an appointment.

Welcoming our New Associate Director, Professor John Doolittle

BY JOHN RICHARDSON

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. John Doolittle, Associate Professor, School of Communication, as CTE's new Associate Director for Teaching and Learning Resources. John replaces Professor Lyn Stallings, who returned to fulltime teaching in the Department of Mathematics & Statistics.

As Associate Director, John Doolittle is responsible for the qualitative facets of our mission and ensuring AU faculty have access to the latest advances in higher education pedagogy. He oversees the Ann Ferren Teaching Conference, Blackboard course information system, Teaching with Technology Workshops, Adjunct Faculty Orientation, Noontime Conversations, the Greenberg Seminars for Ph.D. students and consultations with faculty.

Professor Doolittle's roles at AU have included faculty member, department head, Chair of the University Chairs and Directors Committee on Faculty Relations member. These have provided him with a rich background in the culture and experiences of AU faculty that is essential to filling the Associate Director's position effectively. He has also worked closely with CTE for several years.

An impressive scholarly and professional record complement Professor Doolittle's contributions in the areas of teaching and service. He has published seventeen papers in both scholarly and popular venues. His book, *Don McNeill & His Breakfast Club* generated new interest in the history of radio programming. As a broadcast journalism professional, Dr. Doolittle has worked as program host, news anchor, announcer, reporter and producer.

Please join me in welcoming Professor John Doolittle to his new position in CTE.



each visit to the faculty corner earns one raffle entry for an

iPod Nano

every month!

the faculty corner hurst hall 204-B x2734

technology • innovation • coffee

cte locations

BLACKBOARD

hurst hall room 11, x 2553

m - f 9am - 5pm

FACULTY CORNER

hurst hall room 204B, x 2734

m - th 9:30am - 8pm

f 9:30am - 5:30pm

NEW MEDIA CENTER

hurst hall room 212, x 2560

m - th 9:30am - 11pm

f 9:30am - 5:30pm

sun 12noon - 11pm

SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH LAB (SSRL)

hurst hall room 202, x 3862

m - th 9:30am - 11pm

fri 9:30am - 7pm

sat 12noon - 7pm

sun 10am - 7pm

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION LAB

ward building- sub terrace, x 3866

m - th 9:30am - 11pm

fri 9:30am - 7pm

sat 12noon - 7pm

TEACHING & LEARNING RESOURCES

hurst hall room 11, x 3926

m - f 9am - 5pm

AUDIO/VISUAL SERVICES GROUP

anderson lower level, x 2296

m - th 8am - 11pm

fri 8am - 6pm (later as requested)

sat & sun as requested

cte events

ADJUNCT FACULTY ORIENTATION

1/11 5pm - 7pm

ANN FERREN TEACHING CONFERENCE

1/13 11am - 4pm

SSRL Seminar: CTE Consultant Conference Grant Recipient Presentations

1/27 11am - 2pm

SSRL Research Seminar

2/24 12 noon - 1pm

SSRL Seminar

3/24 12 noon - 1pm

SSRL Seminar

2/3/06 11am - 4pm