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The Information Technology Services Newsletter is a compilation of articles written by ITS staff members, providing the Samuel Merritt College Community with updates on current and upcoming technology endeavors.

What's New in ITS ...

Enterprise and Web Applications – Blair Simmons

The IT Applications team is currently seeking to fill the open Applications Systems Analyst position. This staff member provides application software support, develops testing and implementation procedures, documents and implements solutions for administrative areas of the College. The staff member will become familiar with and utilize software including: PowerCampus/IQ.Web Self-Service (student information), PowerFAIDS (financial aid), Lawson (HR/Payroll/Accounting), and other enterprise information systems. In addition, he or she will provide basic training for staff in the use of administrative applications.

In the early part of 2008 the college website received an overhaul. The new site is built on the latest version of Drupal CMS, an open source content management system which features a high level of design flexibility, integrated security with samuelmerritt.edu, and easy-to-use web authoring tools. During the spring and summer months, Michael Tam, web designer, has conducted a series of instructional sessions to help web content providers throughout the college more effectively maintain the information that is made accessible to the public.

In an effort to bring all of the college's enterprise database management systems to a standard level of performance and compliance with our commercial information systems,






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the applications team is performing migrations of all Microsoft SQL servers from version 2000 Standard to version 2005 Enterprise. Migration of these systems will ensure that IT has the infrastructure to support future releases of major software platforms such as the PowerCampus student information systems and PowerFAIDS financial aid system. Jacqueline Peter is leading the charge to complete these system upgrades. PowerFAIDS will be on SQL Server 2005 Enterprise in July 2008, and other enterprise systems will follow shortly thereafter.

In 2007, over ten web servers were in production in the Samuel Merritt College data center to support the applications infrastructure of the college. During the spring of 2008, the applications team consolidated many of the college's web applications in effort to reduce complexity, hardware and software license and support costs, and energy. Marvin Lee oversaw the web server consolidation project, and was able to reduce the number of systems dedicated to web applications by over 50%.

The applications team is looking forward to engaging in projects during the second half of 2008 that will improve functionality of information systems, reduce manual data entry efforts, and provide new services to the campus community that will enhance the educational experience.

Network Services Updates - Marcus Walton

-  Smart Classrooms – Upgrades to podium computers are underway. Seven workstations are scheduled for deployment this year.
-  Oakland Intrusion Prevention System – NST is currently working on performance tuning and updating software to the latest version on network firewalls for better network security.
-  OpScan – Plans are underway to phase in new test grading systems in faculty work areas.
-  Anatomy Lab – Construction is underway to make wireless networking available in the Peralta Pavilion human anatomy lab.
-  Dell Laptops – A new shipment of computers has been delivered and received by the department. This stock will meet demands from the community until the year ends.

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Current IT Projects

We have great and exciting projects lined up for this year. Check 'em out!

***PowerFAIDS/ PowerCampus/
IQ.Web/Self-Service - Jacqueline
Peter***



Currently, the College is using PowerFAIDS to track Financial Aid, PowerCAMPUS to track inquiry, applicant, student, alumni and donor information. In conjunction with PowerCAMPUS, IQ.Web is used for transactions that include online applications, online course registration, the ability for students to see their information and pay bills online as well as other functionality.

On July 25th, we successfully moved the PowerFAIDS software from SQL Server 2000 to the latest version of SQL Server – SQL Server 2005. Within the next few months PowerCAMPUS will be moved or upgraded to SQL Server 2005. After that, we will install and test the new version of PowerCAMPUS and the software called Self-Service which is the replacement of IQ.Web.

Self-Service has a new look and feel and will offer more flexibility in creating online functionality. We are looking forward to the improvements that will offer to our potential student, students, alumni, faculty and donors.

The Institutional Portfolio Project – Blair Simmons

Information Technology is teaming up with Institutional Research, Academic/Instructional Innovation, and the Accreditation Steering Committee to produce an online repository of institutional data.

As an accredited member of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), Samuel Merritt College is tasked with adopting a 'culture of assessment, or, dedication to collecting information on institutional performance, analyzing the information, implementing measures for improvement, and evaluating the effectiveness of the these measures. Essential to this process is the Institutional Portfolio – a single source for accreditation information and institutional data, assessment tool for educational effectiveness, and dashboard for institutional key performance indicators.

Work is underway to develop this multi-modular web-based information system. This system will consist of a combination of commercial software implementation, in-house development, and outsourced development endeavors. In using this 'best of breed' approach, one of the greatest challenges will be to adhere to design standards making the whole product seamless and unified.

The core components of the portfolio are scheduled to be introduced to the community by October 1, 2007, with the total system due to go live some



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time in 2009. Once completed, the Institutional Portfolio will be the nerve center for the college's efforts in assessment and continuous improvement of the educational experience.

Data Center Expansion – Blair Simmons

In response to critical system failures that occurred earlier in this year due to environmental inadequacies in the Oakland campus data center, ITS has completed infrastructure design and construction, based on the standards set forth by the Sutter Health Technology Infrastructure Group, for a new data center located on the L-Level of Peralta Pavilion. At its completion this data center will have the capacity to house over 30 enterprise servers, in addition to the HSSC data facility.

In June 2008 the Network Services Team completed the first major goal towards implementing enterprise continuity and disaster recovery methodologies. A virtualization center was constructed as the new platform for server development. The VMWare virtualization technology allows for a multitude of mission critical systems to reside simultaneously on a clustered hardware resource pool, improving system performance and availability. The virtualization center will also help reduce energy and space consumption as well as reducing the risk of equipment overheating. The IT strategy for the future is to standardize systems on the virtualization platform.

Web Accessibility for All – Michael Tam

Samuel Merritt College is committed to creating accessible sources of information, including the College's website. Web accessibility refers to the practice of making websites usable by people of all abilities and disabilities. Our goal is to provide equal access to information on the website, regardless of the user.

One such barrier is visually impaired users accessing information from our website. These users would often use specialized screen reader software to verbalize the content on the web page. There are measures that can be applied to our web pages that will assist the screen reader software, making for a better web experience for all users.

To aid our efforts, we have teamed up with *Jiva Creative*, a skilled consulting group in the Bay Area. Web accessibility is not a one and done ordeal; it is an ever evolving process that will always play a role in the College's website.

MS SharePoint 2007 – Mary Grefal

SharePoint is one of the numerous Microsoft Office products that will allow the user to upload and store pertinent documents in a single repository. Documents include IT forms, how-to's, policies and procedures which can also be accessed by the community. We're expecting to roll this out some time in fall and as part of the Finance and Administration Division's EOW Plan.

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And now from our Helpdesk ...

Basic Helpdesk Information – Tal Schrey



The Helpdesk is here to help you Monday thru Friday from 8am to 6pm. You may call 510-869-6836 then choose option 2.

When requesting a password change, it is necessary to call the helpdesk. We cannot make account changes via non-SMC email requests for security reasons.

When leaving a message for the helpdesk, please be sure to leave your first and last name and a contact phone number.

We offer full support for Windows XP operating system and limited support for Macintosh, Windows Vista, and PDAs. There are available computers in the various labs and libraries at each of the 4 campuses.

If you are using a lab or library machine and need to print, you will need to purchase a GoPrint card. Printing is 10 centers per page. To retrieve your print job, use the GoPrint station located near the lab or library printers.

When calling about a problem on a lab or library computer, please provide the name of the lab you are in and the station number. The station number is on a label on the lower right corner of the monitor.

If you are having problems connecting to the internet via the SMC wireless network, in addition to providing your name and the location you are connecting from, we need the location you are connecting from, we need the MAC address of your wireless card. This is usually a 16 digit number on a sticker on the bottom side of your computer.

Helpdesk Statistics – Marcus Walton

Summer is almost over! The Helpdesk team has been busy in re-imaging all the computers in the computer labs along with the tickets submitted and closed.

As of year-to-date, here are the opened and closed incidents and work orders:

Incidents:

Calls Opened: **2,654**
Calls Closed : **2,576**

Work Orders:

WO Opened : **21%**
WO Closed : **2%**

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Everyone is welcome to send in their comments, ideas or contributions via email to Blair Simmons, bsimmons@samuelmerritt.edu or Mary Grefal, mgrefal@samuelmerritt.edu