



The past academic year has proved to be another challenging, successful, and exciting year for Samuel Merritt University ITS. The year was especially challenging due to volatility economy, a moratorium on capital spending, and major office renovations. Our mission remains to provide technology solutions to the Samuel Merritt University community that facilitate learning and enhance the educational experience. With ongoing technology changes, we strive to provide support and guidance, and to help meet the goals of our institutional community, in all aspects of technology.

## IT PROJECTS: YEAR IN REVIEW

### Projects Completed

- SMURF Implementation (10/23/2009)
- MS Office 2007 Upgrade (10/31/2009)
- Business Equipment and Service Contract Replacement (12/15/2009)
- Exchange Server 2007 Upgrade (2/1/2010)
- APTA Connect System (2/11/2010)
- VMWare Enterprise Upgrade (3/1/2010)
- SMU Alert System (5/25/2010)
- HEOA Regulatory Compliance (6/15/2010)
- Campus Displacement and Relocation (6/30/2010)
- MySMU Community Web Portal (8/27/2010)

### Projects In-Progress

- Wide Area Network Upgrade
- Faculty Access to SMURF
- Course and Event Scheduling System
- Improvements to the SMU Website
- Managing Your Identity Through Automation
- New SMU Online Directory

### Projects in the Queue

- Clinical Partnership Tracking System
- Improved Pay-for-Print System

### Projects in Discovery Phase

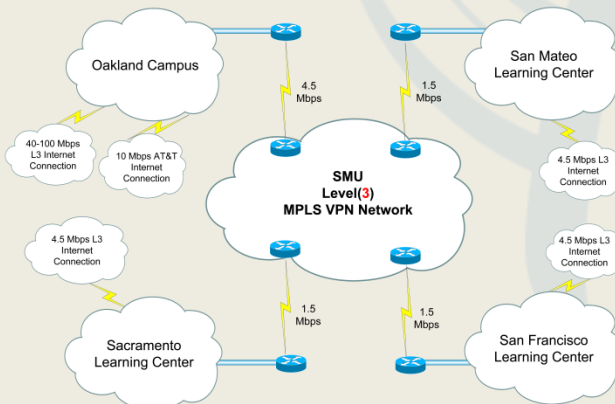
- Active Directory 2008
- Alumni/Student email solution
- ARES Course Reserve System
- Data Center Environmental Control
- Document Imaging Management Pilot
- Online Calendar and File Sharing
- Video Streaming

## WIDE AREA NETWORK: INCREASED NETWORK SPEED

*Marcus Walton*

As Samuel Merritt University becomes more dependent on web-based technologies, distant learning, and online collaboration tools, our network needs to be able to support these activities. Enhancing network bandwidth will provide us with prompt access to information and allow us to do more. Below are the details of the Network Services team's plan to upgrade our network and provide all users with significantly improved access speeds.

We are moving away from the traditional hub-and-spoke topology to a fully meshed topology. In a fully meshed configuration, all sites will be able to communicate throughout the SMU VPN (Virtual Private Network). Each learning center's Internet bandwidth will be increased from 1.5 Mbps to 4.5 Mbps, which includes an independent connection to Oakland for each campus...no more congestion... This will increase the connection speed by 300%!



These will be the upgrades for each campus:

- Sacramento from 1.5 Mbps to 4.5 Mbps Internet Link with a 1.5 Mbps VPN Link to Oakland

- San Mateo from 1.5 Mbps to 4.5 Mbps Internet Link with a 1.5 Mbps VPN Link to Oakland
- San Francisco from 1.5 Mbps to 4.5 Mbps Internet Link with a 1.5 Mbps VPN Link to Oakland
- Oakland from 14.5 Mbps to 40.0 Mbps Internet Link to All Learning Centers.

In the end the Samuel Merritt Wide Area Network will increase from an aggregate of 20 Mbps to over 60 Mbps. The keys to a successful network are capacity, redundancy, and flexibility. The new WAN will give us strength in all of these areas, allowing us to meet the bandwidth needs of today and the future.

## SAMUEL MERRITT UNIVERSITY'S COMMUNITY PORTAL - mySMU

*Michael Tam*



Over the summer, Information Technology Services introduced our new online community portal system. MySMU provides every member of the SMU community with streamline access to important information, systems and resources. Our community portal delivers a centralized and secure online collaboration environment for students, faculty and staff.

Highlight of Features:

### [Quick Launch for SMU Web Applications](#)

How many times a day do you have to type in your password? MySMU is designed to be your launching pad for all of your web programs. Once you have logged into mySMU you will not need to log in again. The first thing you see upon logging in is a list of SMU Web Apps – Webmail, Blackboard, SMURF, the Library Catalog and more. One click and you're in!

### [Targeted Announcements](#)

Announcements, news, and information updates in mySMU are presented based on your role in the University, showing you the information that is important to you. You will spend less time searching for relevant information and less time weeding through impersonal email messages.

### [Role-Based Navigation](#)

The menus and menu options in mySMU are customized based on your role in the University, making it easier to locate the online resources you need. There are fewer clicks and fewer pages to navigate, saving you time and reducing frustration.

### [Interactive Message Boards](#)

Are you: Looking for a place to live? Needing to find text books at a better price? Selling your car? Students, faculty and staff will have a forum for sharing interests with each other outside of the academic and business arenas.

To visit mySMU, click on any of the mySMU links on Samuel Merritt University's website or go to <https://mysmu.samuelmerritt.edu>. Log in using your standard SMU username and password, the same credentials used to log on to email.

## FACULTY ACCESS TO SMURF

*Jacqueline Peter*



What's new in SMURF (Samuel Merritt University Records and Finance)? Information Technology Services is currently preparing to introduce SMURF access for faculty members, faculty advisors, and academic department heads. Through the available anywhere web access, faculty will be able to view their course schedules, class lists, record attendance, enter final grades, and manage assistants. Advisors will be able to view their advisees' schedules, unofficial transcripts, grades and attendance. Department heads will have the ability to view courses in their department, set up courses that require grade approval as well as approve grades for courses that need grade approval.

The IT Department is currently working with key personnel from the Academic Division to set up a pilot group for testing this new functionality. A group of 11 academic council members will have access to the faculty, advising, and department head functionality during the Fall 2010 academic term. Based on the success of the pilot, we expect to be ready to bring the remainder of the faculty onboard by Spring 2011.

## COURSE AND EVENT SCHEDULING SYSTEM

*Blair Simmons*

The Health Education Center (HEC) staff at SMU is responsible for coordinating room assignments for academic courses, recurring committee and departmental meetings, special informational and instructional seminars, outside client events and many other types of events which require facility space on the Oakland campus. For several years the HEC staff has been challenged in fulfilling requests for space. The use of antiquated scheduling software has made academic scheduling a time consuming endeavor. Keeping the HEC calendar and the student registration system fully synchronized has proven to be a laborious and often complex task. Publishing room schedules for public view is a very manual, redundant process. Posted information quickly becomes stale and in many cases needs to be updated by recursively posting sheets of paper strategically throughout the campus.

During summer 2010 SMU acquired a new event scheduling information system to help address the challenges of the room scheduling process. The EMS Campus system is designed specifically to meet the needs of institutions of higher education for scheduling academic courses and other campus events harmoniously. EMS Campus is integrated with SMU's PowerCAMPUS student information system, so all academic courses and their schedules are fully synchronized between the two systems.

In addition to creating a context of seamless information, the synchronization process eliminates hours of data entry work in the Office of the Registrar. EMS Campus also features 'optimization scenarios' which allow the HEC staff to schedule courses in bulk automatically. With this feature, tasks that used to take hours now take mere minutes.

EMS Campus information is accessible via the web. Now, faculty, staff, students and visitors may view our room schedules in real time from anywhere.

The EMS Campus system was used to generate room assignments for classes held on the Oakland campus for the Fall 2010 term. Full features of the system are scheduled to be operational by October 2010.

## IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SMU WEBSITE

*Michael Tam*

We have combed through user feedback for ideas on **how we could improve Samuel Merritt University's** website. Common concerns from our users relate to site navigation and site performance. We plan on addressing these concerns with aesthetic and usability improvements as well as upgrades to our hosting infrastructure.

Our website is powered by Drupal, a flexible and powerful content management system. Later this year, we will upgrade our website to the newest version—Drupal 7. This system will provide us with a richer platform to manage our website and allow us to better utilize emerging technologies to present our content and information.

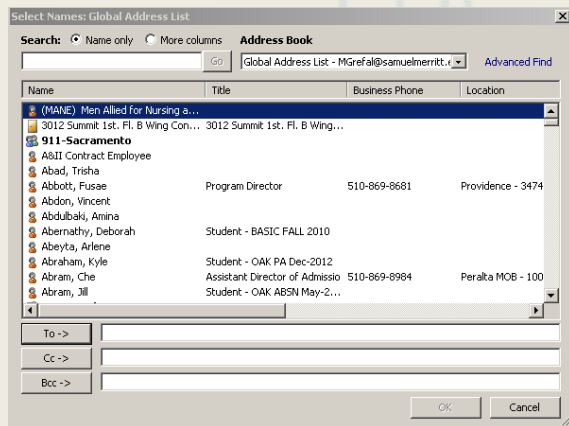
Along with an upgraded content management system, **we will also improve the website's general look and feel, otherwise known as the website's theme.** The changes to the website's theme will include repositioning of elements and the addition of new components to enhance site navigation.

Speed and performance of the website is very important to ensure a positive browsing experience. We have two strategies to address this issue. The first is an increase of our internet bandwidth through our internet service providers. The second is to upgrade our website server hardware. This approach will improve the website's speed and allow pages to load up quicker.

For more on the bandwidth upgrade, read "Wide Area Network: Increased Network Speed" in this issue of the newsletter.

## MANAGING YOUR IDENTITY THROUGH AUTOMATION

*Richard Brown*



Your Active Directory Account (AD, Login) is now the single source of your identity and access to information resources at SMU.

Until recently AD accounts and email accounts were created manually for faculty and staff. This involved opening an email with the contents from a new hire request web form, copying and pasting the data from the email into the appropriate AD fields, making some decisions to determine group membership, making sure all the data is formatted correctly, and creating

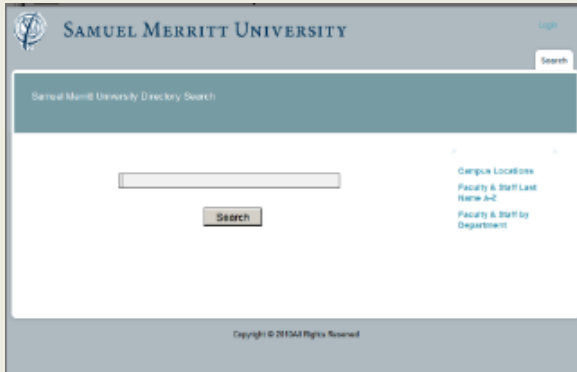
an email account. Not an overly difficult task, but it still takes time and leaves potential for human error.

Now the accounts are created automatically after one visual approval step. As a new hire form is submitted, the data is automatically manipulated and formatted for a new AD and email account. A technician does a visual check for glaring errors. Once the request form data is deemed free of errors, the technician is able to process the request in a single click. From here the account is created and multiple notifications are sent to appropriate personnel. Student accounts follow a similar process.

Other automated processes are in the works: as applicants become students, and finally, alums, and as employees retire or move on to other ventures. The automated processes ensure data is entered in a consistent format every time and frees up technician time to work on other issues. The consistency automation provides is important as we move to a single-sign-on model, since all of our information systems are becoming increasingly interdependent.

## NEW SAMUEL MERRITT UNIVERSITY ONLINE DIRECTORY

*Marvin Lee*



Samuel Merritt University's online directory is a handy resource for finding faculty and staff contact information. The directory is easy to find, as you will see a 'Directory' link at the bottom of every page on our main website. This year, we will introduce a new online directory. Employee contact information will be easier to search, access and maintain than ever before.

The new directory drastically improves individual and departmental search capabilities by the user. The new interface dynamically provides suggestions as you type in the search box, similar to Google search's auto-complete feature.

The new directory features new and improved information security and privacy control. Public visitors to our website will have limited access to information, while authenticated SMU faculty and staff will be able to view employee contact information in full detail. The system will include an option to opt-out of the public search for users who have concerns over their information being displayed publicly.

The new directory will automatically synchronize with our Active Directory, allowing the information to always be current and accurate. Users will have the capability of updating their office location, phone number, department, and job title information, pending supervisor approval.

Stay tuned for the new SMU directory coming soon.

### **More Information...**

#### **SAMUEL MERRITT UNIVERSITY ADOPTS MICROSOFT WINDOWS 7**

*Tal Schrey*

With support for Windows XP ending soon and the ongoing development and use of multimedia in the classroom, Samuel Merritt University has adopted Windows 7 as our standard operating system. Currently the IT department has upgraded the lab and public computers at its main campus and three learning center campuses, and is in the planning stages of replacing obsolete faculty and staff computers with new equipment running Windows 7.

Along with improved compatibility for multimedia, Windows 7 is also more compatible with hardware devices. With computers, printers, and other hardware constantly changing, Windows 7 provides greater support and flexibility to meet these changes head on.

Windows 7 has improved multitasking capability to include Aero Peek (views desktop content by holding the mouse over open items and icons for a thumbnail preview instead of having to open the window to view the contents), Aero Shake (while grabbing an active window, shake the mouse to minimize other open panes), and Aero Snap (by dragging a window to

either the left or right side of the screen, the window will resize to half the screen. This is great for side-by-side comparison).

With the upgrade to Windows 7, Samuel Merritt University is poised for integrating cutting-edge technology and learning tools to keep its position as a premier health sciences institution.

### ***Did you know...***

#### **PASSWORDS** *Vene Cahayag*

These days everything requires a password. If you're like me, you probably have so many different passwords that it's difficult to keep track of them.

Although this can be frustrating, it is imperative to remember why passwords are important: passwords are often the first defense against intrusion (MacGregor). They protect personal information, private documents, etc. Information Technology Services is committed to maintaining the integrity of your online credentials. For this reason, IT staff requires verification of identity for students and employees alike when speaking with any user requesting a password reset.

Below are some reminders and helpful tips:

- The username and password you were given provides access to your Webmail, Blackboard, SMURF, VPN, Wi-Fi, computer labs, and more.
- As stated in our policy, "User Identity Management"  
(<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/policies/divisional/it/user-identity-management>)

- Passwords - All users are required to change passwords every 120 days. Valid passwords contain at least seven characters and include at least one uppercase letter, one lower case letter, and one numeric character. When changing passwords, users may not reuse the existing password.

- For security purposes, do not share or give your password to anyone. If a member of our Helpdesk staff needs your credentials to troubleshoot they are required to reset your password. Once they have resolved your issue you are responsible for changing your password.
- There are a few ways you can reset your password.
  - Click on the Password Reset link on our Helpdesk website. Refer to our FAQ "How to change your SMU password" for more details.
  - Call the Helpdesk to have it reset for you.

## EXCHANGE MAILBOX QUOTAS

*Thatcher Wright*

Mailbox quotas are enforced in order to ensure that the University's email servers run at peak performance levels. These quota sizes were determined based on the number of users on the system, the average size of mailboxes, and anticipated growth of the institution.

### Quota Sizes and Actions – What do they Mean?

Mailbox quota sizes for Faculty and Staff are as follows:

- Warn: 850 MB – When your mailbox size reaches 850 MB, the system will send you a notification. This is a reminder that it would be a good idea to start managing your mailbox to reduce its size
- Prohibit Send: 950 MB – When your mailbox reaches 950 MB, you will be prevented from sending email.
- Prohibit Send and Receive: 1 GB – When your mailbox reaches 1 GB in size, you are prevented from sending or receiving email until you reduced the size of your mailbox.

### You have reached your quota, what can you do?

Get rid of non-useful email messages:

- Delete any unnecessary email items. Information has a useful lifespan, and some messages do not need to be archived
- Purge the recoverable deleted items. This important step is most often overlooked. Remember that your email messages emptied from the recycle bin remain recoverable for ten days and are counting negatively against your quota.

### Create an Email Archive

When you have a need archive email messages, you may wish to contact the Help Services Team to assist you with creating the archive.

### Decide on a Strategy for Archiving

The best approach is to keep it simple. Adopt a broad approach which will make it easy to locate all the messages you want to relocate. Needs vary for the individual user, but the more general the approach, the simpler and faster it is to archive.

For more information on how to manage your mailbox see:

[http://www.samuelmerritt.edu/helpdesk/article\\_managing-your-exchange-mailbox](http://www.samuelmerritt.edu/helpdesk/article_managing-your-exchange-mailbox)

### MS HOME USE PROGRAM, E-LEARNING AND PC HELPS

*Mary Grefal*

The SMU community can obtain numerous discounts and free online training in partnership with the AICCU and our certified vendors:

- (Faculty and Staff) Microsoft Home Use Program now offers MS Office 2010  
[https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/information\\_technology/ms\\_hup](https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/information_technology/ms_hup)
- Computer Hardware and Software Discounts  
[https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/information\\_technology/technology\\_discounts](https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/information_technology/technology_discounts)
- (Faculty and Staff) Microsoft E-Learning Resources  
[https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/information\\_technology/ms\\_elearning](https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/information_technology/ms_elearning)
- (Faculty and Staff) For questions on Microsoft Office Applications, please call the PC Helps Desktop Support:  
[https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/information\\_technology/pchelps](https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/information_technology/pchelps)



## HELPDESK STATISTICS

*Shaniel Lal*



The Helpdesk has been busy this summer with upgrading all the computer labs with Windows 7, other major projects, daily tickets, emails, and calls. We've met our Service Level Agreement (SLA) at a rate of 92.7% during the past 12 months, as compared to the previous year's numbers of 91.5%.

We have been exploring and incorporating new technology that will enhance performance and increase productivity.

IT Service Requests (Aug. 2009 - July 2010)

Calls Opened: 3,144

Calls Closed: 3,227

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*Everyone is welcome to send in their comments, ideas and contributions via email to Blair Simmons*  
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