The Information Technology Holiday Reception is December 18, 2008, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The event will be in the Latham Ballroom in The Inn at Virginia Tech. As always, The Inn will be festively adorned with trees decorated by local businesses.

Sakai conference

The first Regional Sakai Conference was hosted at Virginia Tech this past month and coordinated by conference co-chairs John Moore and Eddie Watson. Enrollment for this conference, held November 11-12 at The Inn, exceeded their goal of 150 participants.

This conference focused on two general themes: 1) pedagogy and instructional strategies supported by Sakai, and 2) migration/adoption strategies. Subthemes included positioning Sakai as a platform for new pedagogies, student engagement, ePortfolio, and assessment. Michael Korcuska (Sakai Foundation Executive Director) and Aileen Huang-Saad (2008 winner of the Teaching with Sakai Innovation Award) were the keynote speakers.

Virginia Tech Information Technology presenters included Eddie Watson who delivered a session entitled “How Change Models for Higher Education Inform Rollout Strategies for Sakai and OSP.” He also spoke as a panelist on the subject of “Planning Pilot Programs and Production.” Marc Zaldivar organized two sessions comprised of Virginia Tech students who discussed their usage of ePortfolios. He also co-presented “Measuring and Analyzing Student Learning Outcomes” with Ray Van Dyke and Steve Culver from Virginia Tech’s Office of Academic Assessment.

Judy Albert Scholarship

The Judy Diane Albert Memorial Scholarship is being established through the Virginia Tech Foundation to honor the memory of Judy and to provide assistance to residents of the New River Valley—from Bland County to Roanoke—who wish to pursue a curriculum in information technology at Virginia Tech.

To establish the scholarship as an endowed or permanent fund, a minimum of $50,000 needs to be raised. Payroll deductions as well as one-time gifts may be made.

Watch for more information from Wanda Baber.

. . . more charitable giving

Toys for Tots boxes are available throughout Information Technology. Boxes are located in the AISB, RB 14, and Torgersen. The deadline for these collections is December 18.

Security alert

Google says they have added more than 300 million documents that were previously un-indexed because of their new ability to index scanned PDF documents. Use of a newer optical recognition technology enables the addition of these documents.

A danger is surfacing previously unseen files that contain personally identifying or otherwise sensitive information. One year-end house-cleaning task is to examine Web folders for any such documents. Note that discovery tools for personally identifying information (PII), including Find_SSNs, Spider, and Senf, have limited ability to find these same documents.

For more on the PII discovery tools, see www.security.vt.edu.

FDI event

To assist participating faculty members in selecting computers, the Faculty Development Institute will hold an all-day even on December 11. This showcase allows exploration of the computer models for the upcoming spring/summer 2009 track. There are 21 configurations of Dell, Fujitsu, and Apple computers. Desktop, laptop, and Tablet PC models are available. There will also be formal presentations as part of the event, including Apple break-out sessions, “The Practical Professor,” and “Emerging Technologies.”

For more information, see www.fdi.vt.edu/FDI_Announcements.html.