First Year Experiences & Electronic Portfolios

Teggin Summers and Marc Zaldivar (Learning Technologies) joined Mary Ann Lewis, Don Orth, Therese Lovegreen, and Gary Kinder to present Virginia Tech’s experience with electronic portfolios within First Year Experiences. This session was a plenary session in CUNY Symposium on First Year Experiences. The Virginia Tech team discussed the multiplicity of approaches to first year experiences across the university and the desire and need for these experiences to be discipline- and program-specific. Commonalities across projects include the common book, course of study planning, and electronic portfolios.

Three approaches discussed are the development of a first year experience across a department that is itself undergoing developmental change; the support and facilitation of transfer student success; and the role of advising for first year students.

Jiyeon Lee, Clarence Chen, Judit Torok, Gary Kinder, Don Orth, Marc Zaldivar, Teggin Summers, Mary Ann Lewis, Bret Eynon, Therese Lovegreen

Scholarships

In memory of our colleagues, remember the opportunities to contribute to Virginia Tech scholarships. The Mike Naff Scholarship Fund is now accepting donations. The Judy Diane Albert Memorial Scholarship Fund is having a fund-raiser February 29, AISB (also see www.cns.vt.edu/jdamemorial/). Contributions can be made through “Giving to” on the university homepage.

Unified Communications

The first shipment of equipment for the Unified Communications application project has arrived at the warehouse.

News, status reports, and related information about the Unified Communications applications project and the three associated infrastructure projects can be found at the website—www.nis.vt.edu/uc.
EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative 2012 Annual Meeting was entitled “Taking the Pulse: Connecting, Assessing, and Innovating.” Several Learning Technologies contributors were part of the February 13–15 meeting in Austin, Texas.

- ELI Leadership Roundtable Session, conducted by John P. Campbell (Purdue University), W. Gardner Campbell, Shelli B. Fowler, and John Fritz (University of Maryland, Baltimore County)
- You Get What You Measure, So What Are We Measuring? A Panel Debate on Learning Analytics, by Randall Bass (Georgetown University), John P. Campbell (Purdue University), W. Gardner Campbell, Shelli B. Fowler, and John Fritz (University of Maryland, Baltimore County)
- Faculty Voices in Emerging Technologies: Adoption, Support, and Implementation, by Jennifer Sparrow
- Learning Analytics, by W. Gardner Campbell and John Fritz (University of Maryland, Baltimore County)
- Living, Learning, Cyberspace: A Program-Wide Blogging Initiative for Virginia Tech's Honors Residential College, by W. Gardner Campbell, Shelli B. Fowler, Rhiwika Sensharma (student), Jennifer Sparrow, and Robert Stephens (History)

CGIT and viticulture

Peter Sforza, Thomas Dickerson, and Erica Adams (Center for Geospatial Information Technology—CGIT) presented "Web-based, GIS vineyard site evaluation for Eastern US viticulture" at the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers (www.aag.org/cs/annualmeeting). The USDA-funded project developed in response to the steady growth of the wine industry in the eastern United States, which is generating an increasing demand for high quality grapes, and the land on which to grow them. Producers are looking for ways to forecast a variety of site-related factors including the potential for excessive precipitation or cold damage, soil composition, and the amount of sunlight that could be expected on a particular site.

CGIT is developing a public Web application with a GIS-based viticulture suitability model incorporating climatic, topographic, and soil parameters. This application would allow end-users to select their site while a geo-processing tool evaluates its conditions. The result will be a summary of site conditions with supporting information on what those site conditions mean. The application would also suggest grape varieties that are best suited for growth in that area. This model will empower users by improving their knowledge of site suitability, and allowing them to select the grape cultivars that have the best chance to thrive on available lands. This tool could result in more efficient and precise vineyard planning, reduced costs for grape production, reduced environmental stresses to vines, and more consistent production of high-quality grapes and wine in the region. The tool will also help empower wine producers to continue their expansion, and add to their workforce.


Among these are FERPA, data security, access to data for purposes of e-discovery, location of data, ownership of data, publicity, disclaimer of warranty, governing law and jurisdiction.