ePortfolio Initiatives

The ePortfolio Initiatives project has been growing steadily over the past year, now working with over 2,000 students. All colleges are exploring ePortfolios for student learning, for assessment and accreditation, and for professional development.

David McPherson, formerly director of Online Course Services, is the new assistant director for ePortfolio development. David has taught in the computer science department and elementary-level special education. His degrees are in math, special education, and computer science. He brings a high level of software development skills, combined with his education experience.

Ashley Holmes is a graduate student in Human Nutrition, Food and Exercise, and has been participating in ePortfolio development. Ashley will be helping with documentation and engaging students in ePortfolio creation.

New projects for this year include some course-level projects this summer and fall, and work with pre-health programs. Work is underway with VetMed student portfolios.

The largest project is the first pilot year of the new First-Year Experiences. This plan consists of creating and developing quality first-year experiences for all entering students, including transfers. For the next five years, the university will be engaged in developing courses and programs to support three key learning outcomes: problem solving, inquiry, and integration. Students will create a portfolio to help them reflect upon their programs, their plan of study, and their “pathway” through Virginia Tech. Fall 2010 begins with six programs and 1200 students.

For more information, visit the ePortfolio website at http://eportfolio.vt.edu or contact ePortfolio@scholar.vt.edu.
InCommon CAMP

InCommon CAMP—Campus Architecture and Middleware Planning—runs from June 21 through June 23 in Raleigh, NC. Mary Dunker is a presenting panelist with others from the University of Michigan and from Penn State University on “It’s All About the Attributes.” The panel will discuss the challenges of exchanging attributes in a meaningful way from both the identity provider and service provider perspectives.

Virginia Tech is a participating member of the InCommon community of 161 higher education institutions and nearly 60 sponsored members.
www.incommonfederation.org/about.cfm.

XCaliber Award 2010

Dr. Bruce Hull and graduate student Courtney Kimmel partnered with Jennifer Sparrow and the InnovationSpace in Learning Technologies to redesign FOR 2554, Nature and American Values, to better engage 21st-century learners. The class increased from 70 to 140 students and technology was one tool utilized to ensure active participation. A Wetpaint wiki allowed students to collaborate in a digital environment; Twitter helped increase student participation during in-class debates and a video project that required students to articulate and defend a position; and websites taught students to communicate in a digital form. The InnovationSpace provided cameras, training, and multimedia workstations to support the class projects. Additionally, Hull, Kimmel and Sparrow worked collaboratively to ensure that the learning outcomes were addressed, that student support (training, directions, troubleshooting) was available, and that technology was running smoothly.

Student responses were positive to the use of increased technology in the course. Said one, "I enjoyed working on a video... It was definitely challenging because my group did not have much experience with that kind of technology. I feel that all the use of technology in the class kept the subject matter interesting and allowed students to engage more, which allows students to learn more. When students are actively learning as they are in this course, they are more likely to want to learn and then remember what they learned later because it has been applied to an activity."

The course website is available at http://natureamericanvalues.wetpaint.com

The XCaliber Award was established to recognize individuals and teams who have made significant contributions toward integrating technology into teaching and learning experiences. The award is conferred by the Center for Innovation in Learning.