

## UH Information Technology Services: Faculty Development Program

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Universities are increasingly looking toward technology to overcome geographical barriers to access, and this has placed new demands on faculty to explore the potential of technology in their classrooms. As a result, faculty development in the use of appropriate applications for teaching and learning has become a critical issue. In the 2000 *Educause* survey (<http://www.educause.edu/issues/survey2001/report.asp>) of current issues in higher education, faculty development was rated, out of forty issues, as the third highest information technology related issue deemed most important for campuses to address for strategic success.

The faculty development efforts of the Distributed Learning and User Services (DLUS) group of the University of Hawai'i system's Information Technology Services (ITS) encompasses a variety of initiatives ranging from providing technology training to the faculty in a number of software applications (Photoshop, Powerpoint, iMovie, and Respondus), to hands-on training in how to improve classroom teaching using technology. In addition, special provisions are made to help faculty prepare to teach online and develop skills in online pedagogy.

Initial faculty development activities conducted by the ITS staff focused on training faculty in the use of WebCT at summer institutes. Although this helped faculty to gain new technical skills, their interest tended to be on "how to" do something rather than "why" a particular task was important in the teaching and learning process. The results of these early efforts were disheartening as faculty creations tended to be no more challenging to students than online correspondence courses. In order to address this problem, a new faculty development program, Teaching And Learning using Electronic Networked Technologies (TALENT) was developed over several years to train faculty in pedagogical issues of online teaching in addition to offering them hands-on technical training in WebCT and other software applications.

Faculty tend to teach the way they were taught as students. They combine the teaching styles of favorite professors with strategies developed from their own successful experiences of teaching and standard

administrative procedures for classroom management. While there are tools that can be used to deal with standard teaching situations, effective classroom teaching usually occurs in a dynamic and fluid environment. This is especially true in online teaching. Thus, training in technology enhanced instruction requires familiarizing faculty with pedagogical issues as well as providing effective instruction in the practical technical skills necessary to put a course online. As faculty are more available to commit time to this work during the summer, the TALENT Summer Institute plays an important role in the TALENT program. However, as many prefer to receive this training during the academic year, the TALENT program offers online and interactive television sessions during the Fall and Spring semester. These sessions include a range of topics, such as "Enhancing Interaction and Assessment Using Online Instructional Modules in your Course" (<http://www.hawaii.edu/talent>), which addresses pedagogical as well as technical issues, and "Photoshop, Dreamweaver, and Digital Movies" which is purely technical in content. Participation in TALENT offerings during the academic year tends to be dominated by faculty who are interested in using technology as a resource to add to their traditional face-to-face class. As a result, individual sessions are focused on a variety of topics. For example, the session on how to enhance student interaction in online classes is limited to a threaded discussion of how to use WebCT, but issues of how to use other threaded discussion options often arise and are included in the class.

The Summer Institute and the topical discussions conducted during the academic year are similar in content. The main difference is that the summer program is more compressed due to time limitations. In addition, sessions offered during the academic year are open, while participating in the TALENT Summer Institute is selective and faculty must first apply to be accepted. Interested faculty and staff submit a proposal stating what they hope to accomplish by attending the summer institute. Selection is based on realistic timelines for completion of the project, need for the course or service proposed, and the alignment of the



proposal with campus' priority with respect to technology-facilitated instruction.

Distributed Learning and User Services is a system-wide office. Participation is solicited from all 10 campuses of the University of Hawai'i system. Seventy percent of participants are from the five O'ahu campuses. In total, forty percent are from UH-Mānoa, twenty percent from UH-Hilo and UH-West O'ahu, and another forty percent from the community colleges. These percentages will change as more neighbor island campuses participate and as DLUS develops its distributed, hands-on model at each neighbor island campus.

Acceptance to the TALENT 101 requires faculty to participate, as students, in a month-long, online course followed by two-day hands-on workshop. The purpose of the course is threefold. First, the course explores, through four instructional modules, a sequence of pedagogical issues related to teaching and learning online. These modules include:

- the role of interaction in the online environment
- the role of community formation in the learning process and strategies for developing learning communities in an asynchronous, online classroom
- the role of assessment in measuring student learning and potential computerized assessment methodologies, and
- the application of an evaluation rubric in evaluating already developed and offered online courses.

Faculty usually find the application of the evaluation rubric to other online courses to be an interesting exercise, as it encourages them to evaluate structure, organization, ease of maneuverability, and clarity of directions. All these considerations are explored in the context of the faculty's own course.

TALENT 101 also attempts to provide first hand experience to faculty who may never have taken an online course or never taught online before. They need to learn how to adapt their traditional teaching strategies to online situations. TALENT 101 offers them a taste of that experience. In addition, it seeks to model good online teaching practices that blend multiple teaching strategies and methodologies. Finally, TALENT 101 introduces faculty to WebCT, the course management tool supported by ITS. Faculty gain knowledge of content through readings, participation in threaded discussions, assignments, and assessment of their knowledge. This one-month long online component of the course requires approximately 3-4 hours of work per week. The faculty must complete all the assignments prior to the in-person two-day face to face institute which is the hands-on component of the TALENT workshop where faculty are trained in organizing their course and uploading content to an online environment. While the online portion of TALENT 101 explores the "why" issues of online teaching, the face-to-face component is more practical in nature and covers the many "how to" questions that arise. The content for this portion includes the process of introducing students to the course and familiarizing them with it, teaching online etiquette, dealing with traditional first-day-of-class



administrative issues that arise in teaching an asynchronous course. The hands-on portion is also island-based—that is, due to the dispersed nature of the campuses of the University of Hawai‘i system, each island takes care of its own group of participants. DLUS staff travel to the various islands to provide technology training to participating faculty and offer staff development opportunities for local instructional technology staff.

The University of Hawai‘i delivered over 275 online courses during the spring 2002 semester. The total number of courses offered by the university system continues to grow as faculty become more comfortable with using technology and as the technology becomes easier to use. Due to a high level of interest, DLUS has now developed TALENT 201, in conjunction with Leeward Community College. This program assists faculty in the creation and presentation of content. Workshops in the series include more advanced topics such as storyboarding; shooting, editing, and streaming video; advanced WebCT tools; and narrated and indexed PowerPoint. The course was first offered in August 2002. However, interest by faculty has been so high that a second session had to be added to meet demand.

Technology plays a vital part in the economy of Hawai‘i and continues to gain importance in the teaching and learning process. But such developments are not limited merely to distance courses. While 275 courses were delivered online at UH in the Spring semester of 2002, a total of 450 active WebCT course accounts indicated a much wider use of online strategies, system-wide. These figures, however, barely get at the level of faculty participation in online learning when we consider the number of courses that make use of email, listserves and other applications. The TALENT program, nevertheless, offers an important example of the university’s commitment to preparing faculty to use technology effectively in the classroom and providing them necessary tools to take advantage of the increasing presence and importance of technology in the classroom. It is not inconceivable, however, that as our faculty gain experience in the use of online learning strategies and become more technologically literate, the need for this type of training will cease to be necessary. But for the present, the need for courses such as TALENT remains great.

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