

Departmental Initiative Proposal Academic Year 2001 – 2002

Submitted by:

Assistant Professor Ali Ghane, CSIS Department

Assistant Professor Linda Krause, CSIS Department

Abstract:

Studies show that e-Learning and virtual classrooms are on the rise.

Statistics from a CNN study state that:

International Data Corp. also predicts that the proportion of four-year colleges offering a distance learning program will grow from 62 to 84 percent by 2002. At community colleges, the proportion will rise from 58 to 85 percent.

The National Center for Education Statistics, a branch of the U.S. Department of Education, also found that the total enrollment in distance learning courses across all post-secondary degree-granting institutions roughly doubled -- from 754,000 to 1.6 million -- from 1995 to 1997-98.¹

More than half of students who are taking these on-line courses are over 30 years of age, have a full-time job, and already have a degree. In order for Elmhurst College to remain competitive in the adult evening class offerings and in accelerated majors, it will be necessary to start developing and offering complete on-line courses.

Proposal:

The proposed activity is to develop a strategy for on-line course development and presentation. This activity will be performed with the idea that Blackboard will be used as the environment in which the course will be disseminated. The necessary tools for a multimedia on-line course will be reviewed and recommendations made. Particular emphasis being given to existing software and hardware already owned by Elmhurst College, such as Snap! Server (a streaming video server), Dazzle (a solution to convert analog audio and video to digital), IBID Whiteboard (converts conventional whiteboard technology to digital format). In addition, shareware, freeware and commercially available solutions will be investigated, such as, Microsoft Media Player, RealPlayer, eCollege, HorizonLive, and eCourse. The findings of this activity will be made known to the Elmhurst College community.

The first task will be a survey of on-line courses. It is important to gain an understanding of what is currently being done in this area. There are many virtual classroom sites that offer a demo course, generally the first few classes of a course. The evaluation will be based on instructional design, technology and student support.

¹ <http://www.cnn.com/2000/TECH/computing/09/15/index.elearning/elearning.sidebar/>

The second task will be to do a multimedia tools survey. Various software and hardware will be examined and assessed for its applicable use in producing a complete on-line, multimedia course at Elmhurst College, and for its applicable use as a multimedia component that can be used in a traditional course. The assessment will be done with the various disciplines at Elmhurst College in mind.

The third task will be to put together a demo of a multimedia on-line course, using the tools identified in the second task.

Finally, the findings of this proposed activity will be made known to the Elmhurst College community through a workshop.

Specific Costs:

\$500.00 for software/hardware.

\$2,000.00 faculty salary

Student Benefits:

Most adult students are taking evening courses because they have full-time jobs during the day. Many of these jobs require occasional to significant amounts of travel. This means, missed courses. With a complete on-line course, the student can learn anywhere, anytime, and not be restricted to the days and hours deemed by the college. A missed class no longer means missed material.

Students have the added benefit of being able to replay course content to gain further understanding of the material being covered.

Elmhurst College Benefits:

Although this will require additional work for faculty, it will allow faculty to reach a greater number of students. For Elmhurst College this means greater enrollment, less use of already limited computer labs on campus, and a greater variety of courses and majors. It also allows faculty to be diverse in the way that they present the material, both in on-line and in traditional courses.

To: Faculty Development Committee, c/o Earl Swallow

From: Bill Muellner, Chair, CSIS Department

Topic: Letter of Support for Department Initiative Proposal
by Ali Ghane & Linda Krause

This letter supports fully the Departmental Initiative Proposal of Ali

Ghane and Linda Krause, faculty members in the Department of Computer Science & Information Systems. Their proposal is for a most-worthy project that will involve developing techniques for creating on-line courses. Such courses will be especially important for graduate students and undergraduate adult learners who have severe restrictions on their time.

Dr. W. C. (Bill) Muellner
Chair, CSIS Department