

Illinois Community Colleges Online News and Views

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Serving Illinois Community Colleges by Jeff Newell



Are we being served? ILCCO is a membership consortium of the 48 Illinois community colleges. Services and priorities are driven by goals and objectives established by member colleges. Responding to stated needs in ILCCO's first four years of operation, this is how we have served ourselves and our students:

- 46 of the 48 Illinois community colleges have been impacted through ILCCO by course sharing, course development, or faculty development.
- 36 colleges have developed online courses through ILCCO.
- 43 colleges have had faculty attend training through the ILCCO Learning Academy.
- 24 colleges have shared courses and students, averaging 17 colleges per semester.
- 5,000 students are being served annually through courses developed through ILCCO.
- 1,400 educators have been served through the Learning Academy.
- 450 students annually achieve their learning goals through course sharing.
- 281 online courses were developed through ILCCO.
- 4 statewide, web-based software systems developed to support students, distance learning, and faculty development.

It has been an exciting beginning for

ILCCO. Faculty have been energized through course development as they reached into the online universe. Colleges have been excited to expand their online offerings through course sharing. Colleges are now reaching the point of sharing programs with each other. Students are completing their degrees through increased opportunity.

Rapid change seems to be the hallmark of the information age. ILCCO has evolved since its inception as needs have been identified and addressed. That will likely be the trend for ILCCO as we strive to improve our ability to serve students in the coming years. As we continue to build on our foundation, we continue to identify and target needs and seek solutions.

*Jeff Newell, Director
ILCCO*

Illinois Community Colleges No Boundaries by Dr. Keith Miller



Illinois has a rich history related to community college education. Established in 1901, Illinois' Joliet Junior College was the first public junior college in the nation, and with the creation of Heartland College in 1990, every inch of Illinois and every resident of Illinois is served by one of the state's 48 community colleges.

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No Boundaries, cont.

While geographical boundaries serve to provide all Illinois residents with access to a local community college, because of the power of technology, those geographical boundaries no longer limit the educational programs and services available to students.

Illinois community colleges have a strong history of providing services within our individual districts and of changing and creating new services as the needs of our communities change. We can be appropriately characterized as the “Doers” – we hold ourselves responsible for meeting local educational needs. Historically, the services of an individual community college were both designed and confined to that college’s geographical district. Technological advancements have greatly altered that scenario. Programs and services emanating from Black Hawk College now reach across state boundaries and international waters.

This expansion was made possible by two main instruments—initially through two-way audio-video technologies and more recently through the development of the Internet and e-learning. These two instruments, specifically the Internet, have erased Illinois community colleges’ geographic boundaries—or at least blurred their existence. Students can continue to identify with a particular college while some or all of their courses are transparently delivered to them from other institutions.



So how can we as a community college system benefit from this blurring of boundaries to better serve the needs of students within our individual districts? I would propose that our role is no longer just as “Doers” but also as “Facilitators.” In other words, Black Hawk College can address an educational need within its district by either creating the service (Doer) or by bringing in another Illinois community college (Facilitator) to provide the service. All community colleges have at some point, or do to some extent, contract with outside providers to deliver a program or service deemed necessary for its constituents. The Internet takes this concept of collaboration further, but collaboration does not have to be limited to situations where the Internet is the application tool. The Internet has merely served as a tool to demonstrate to us, the community college system, what is possible. We must take advantage of the opportunities we can provide as a system of community colleges working collaboratively to advance learning for all Illinois residents.

When Black Hawk College contracts with an outside provider for the provision of a service, that service is branded as a Black Hawk College service. For example, if Parkland College offers a unique course, and Black Hawk College facilitates enrollment in that course for one of its students, I consider the course a Black Hawk College course. This concept is similar to having adjunct faculty—regardless of who teaches a course, by entering into a contractual agreement to make that course available to students, the course becomes a Black Hawk College course. When Black Hawk College enters into a contractual arrangement the provider truly is Black Hawk College and the deliverer takes on the identity of Black Hawk College under the provisions of the contract. This same concept can also be applied at the institutional level. If Black Hawk College identifies a need, we should consider contracting with another Illinois community college to address that need rather than always trying to create the service ourselves. This concept represents a shift from our role as “Doer” to our role as “Facilitator,” and positions the Illinois com-

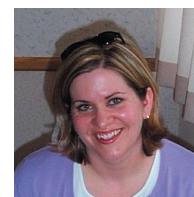
munity college system as a model of collaboration. The important outcome is that Black Hawk College addresses the need for the student—not that we be the creator of the tool that addresses the need. We should be focused on facilitating how our students get connected with the resources they need to add value to their educational experience.

Our facilitator role can be part of the answer for expanding services without greatly expanding our financial bottom line, especially in the economic environment in which we now exist. However, this is not just an answer for these difficult economic times. It simply makes sense to tap into the expertise of other community colleges in the state and to take full advantage of the strength and cohesiveness of the Illinois system. One might say, “What about apportionment, tuition, chargeback, financial aid, etc.?” These issues can and have been addressed through creative methods such as cooperative agreements, seat sharing, and course clearinghouses that can serve as models for future development. Barriers only exist for our students if we let them exist. It is time we take full advantage of the blurring of boundaries that the Internet has caused and let it serve as the impetus for the clarification of a methodology and the continuation of collaborative relationships that can strengthen each community college and the system as a whole.

**Dr. Keith Miller, President
Black Hawk College**

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Creating a Campus Web Portal to Serve Online Students and Faculty by Jennifer Elliott



Developing a campus web portal can be a challenge, but the benefit students and faculty get from using it make the effort worthwhile. Entrata, Illinois Eastern Community College’s (IECC) student

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Campus Web Portal, cont.

and employee web portal was designed to provide students and their instructors integrated access to email, Banner web products, course management systems, course rosters, schedules, and calendaring with a single login. It also allows instructors an easy, password protected place to post their course materials online, but outside of WebCT. Development of Entrata has been tough at times, but it has evolved from previous designs to meet the changing needs of students and instructors. Student and faculty feedback has been a key component in creating a product that meets the needs of its users.

The first version of Entrata was created spring semester of 2002. IECC Webmaster Jeff Gumbel began development on it when the previous web portal, Campus Pipeline, changed from a free to a fee-based product. IECC uses SCT Banner software, which is its legacy system and core software for registration, human resources, and student records. Banner also has web products which allow students access to their records information, such as unofficial transcript, grades, and financial aid details. IECC wanted to integrate with Banner web, allowing students access to these services without a second login. Entrata was designed to both pull information from the Banner legacy system to populate users and authenticate user's access to the Banner web products.

Although the Entrata pilot was deemed a success, it was clear that some additions could be made to make it even more user-friendly. As webmaster and a member of the online course helpdesk team, Gumbel found that often students who called the helpdesk were confused and frustrated by the separate passwords needed to access both Entrata and WebCT. The following se-

mester he merged WebCT authentication into Entrata, which lets a student log into Entrata and be automatically logged into WebCT as well. After logging into Entrata, a student can go to his or her current semester schedule and click a WebCT icon next to any internet courses enrolled in to access that courses material. If a student is having problems with WebCT from home, the helpdesk staff can access Entrata as the student and see exactly what the student is seeing to help troubleshoot access problems. Students are also able to personalize the calendar feature of Entrata to help them schedule their busy lives.

A library reference section was also integrated into Entrata. All IECC subscription services for library databases are linked inside Entrata, so once a student logs into the portal he or she can directly access online library database information. If a database cannot be authenticated into Entrata, the username and password the student can use to access the database is printed there along with the database link for easy access.

The portal is also home to a fully functional email system, eliminating yet another username and password students were once required to remember. The email is a separate system but is fully embedded into Entrata. Users are authenticated to this email system via Entrata, but the interface is fully merged into the interface. The email is fully functional account with virus and spam protection. The account can be accessed both through the Entrata web based interface or popped (pop3) from the email server. Email forwarding is also allowed so students can have an Entrata email account, yet have email sent to another email account they check more often.

Faculty input has been integral in the evolution of Entrata. For many faculty members, using the components of the portal may be the first time one has utilized any technology for instruction, so making it user friendly was a high priority. With relative ease, faculty can post course documents such as syllabi

and class handouts in Entrata. One example of faculty input that has lead to innovation is the course roster feature. Full time and adjunct faculty are able to check their course rosters in Entrata, but many were checking the student information online, and then typing that information into Excel for their grade book. Gumbel realize that with a little coding on his part, the roster information could be made available to export into Excel easily. Now instructors are able to cut and paste the roster information directly into Excel with no retyping necessary. Faculty are also able to submit 1st and 10 day rosters to Student Services electronically thru the portal.

Although creating and maintaining a campus web portal can be a challenge at times, the many ways it can make the lives of online students and faculty easier make it worth the effort. Having a single log in portal has benefited IECC online and hybrid students and faculty by letting them access so many online services from one spot.

*Jennifer Elliott, Curriculum Development Specialist
Illinois Eastern Community Colleges*

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INTRODUCING THE ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACADEMY FOR LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT by Mary Kay Kickels



During the past two years, 2003 to 2004, the Community College Chief Academic Officers and the Presidents Council of Illinois community colleges considered a number of leadership development programs with the purpose of identifying a comprehensive state-wide training and development effort for emerging leaders in our Illinois community colleges. The need to develop, train, and mentor new leaders is critical. We know that within the next five



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Academy for Leadership, cont.

to seven years, more than 40 percent of our community college leaders will be eligible for retirement. It is important to the current community college leaders to take a deliberate first step in a comprehensive, long-range plan to grow and develop future leaders for our Illinois community colleges. A leadership initiative for community colleges is very important to the continued growth and future of our Illinois community colleges.

After a review of leadership seminars and workshops available locally and nationally, it was decided that the Academy for Leadership Training and Development, located in Mesa, Arizona, and part of the Maricopa County Community Colleges, would work with the Illinois community colleges to implement a leadership program. It was my pleasure to represent the Illinois Community College Chief Academic Officers and Presidents Council in helping to shape the new Leadership Program. This was accomplished in 2003 with the assistance of Dr. Gary Filan, Executive Director of The Academy in Mesa, Arizona. We determined that the program would provide the leadership theories, practices, and skills needed to support leaders and those striving to become leaders.

Overall Program Design

The program is based on the concept of training-over-time to allow participants to thoroughly understand, internalize, and apply leadership concepts and skills. The overall focus of the program is to establish a high quality, cost-effective succession and leadership development program which utilizes a skills-based approach, grounded in sound theoretical leadership concepts, principles, and practices. The program design includes a skills-based, best practices approach, a participant-centered action learning environment, a focus on building, developing, and networking the learning community, a focus on transformational leadership, a mentoring component which is an integral part of the overall learning experience, and a system of support for participants' mentors and supervisors.

Program Elements

1. Ten full-day leadership sessions scheduled over one year (i.e., an initial five-day session followed by a year-long practicum experience and conclude with a five-day session).
2. A year-long practicum experience between training sessions with support and guidance provided by self-selected college mentors and Academy liaisons.

Core Leadership Themes

The following core leadership themes serve as a foundation for all of the leadership modules:

- Appreciate, Respect, and Value Differences – To be an effective leader, we must reflect upon our own attitudes and values toward differences in order to move towards a true appreciation and respect of others.
- Transformational Leadership – Transformational leadership is the ability to work collaboratively and proactively with organization members in creating and moving towards a shared vision. These leadership principles are critical to transforming one's self and their department/organization.
- Learning Community – Learning is enhanced through collaboration and utilizes the knowledge, skills, and insights of each person.
- Know Thy Self, Know Thy Organization – To become effective leaders, it is essential to know our values, ideas, and norms and then compare and contract those with the organization.
- Continuous Improvement – A premise of continuous improvement helps to foster the growth of a learning organization as well as each individual's continuous professional growth and development.
- Practical and Relevant – All the program materials have been designed for practitioners to be able to apply the leadership concepts and skill sets in their jobs.
- Results in Measurable Change over Time - The program is designed to measure leadership

behavioral changes over an 18-month long period of time.

- Current, Leading-Edge Knowledge – The content and instructional materials utilized in this leadership program represent on-going research reflecting best practices, leadership principles, and concepts that are both sound and current.

Training Outcomes Assessment

Comprehensive evaluation procedures, using a variety of multiple sources of data, are utilized to measure program outcomes and changes in participant behavior for the Illinois Leadership and Development Program.

The inaugural Illinois Community College Leadership Academy was held on June 6-11, 2004, at the Hilton Inn of Oak Lawn. Dr. Gary Filan and his colleagues facilitated the week-long session. Thirty five participants benefited from the 2004 program. These participants will participate in a year-long program as described above and will return June 5-10, 2005, to conclude the formal part of the Illinois Leadership Academy. It is anticipated that a new cohort will be selected by their respective community colleges.

The Illinois Leadership Academy is a very exciting program, dedicated to developing and supporting leaders from all of our colleges in the state. These emerging leaders learn together, share ideas and best practices, build community, and develop relationships which will insure that the Illinois community colleges remain the best system of community colleges in the nation. We are very proud that all of our Illinois community colleges have endorsed this program and will continue to support it in the years ahead.

*Mary Kay Kickels, President
Paradise Valley Community College
Phoenix, Arizona
Previously Vice President, Academic Affairs
Moraine Valley Community College*

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Blogging for Learning: Web Logs as Instructional Tools

by Ray Schroeder



Blogs (short for weblogs) have been around for less than a decade, but they have grown to be a popular tool for dissemination of news, opinion, creativity, images, audio and, finally learning. Look carefully at the web sites of most major newspapers, magazines, news networks, corporations, and even rock bands; you'll find blogs are common features for one, or two-way communication between principals and the public at large. Estimates vary as to the number of blogs online, but they range from three million to nine million. The Pew Internet Project reports that more than 10% of all web users have read blogs online (http://www.pewinternet.org/report_display.asp?r=113). In short, blogs have become a hot tool for communicating to the world.

Anatomy of a Blog

First and foremost, blogs are web pages. As the name log implies, there is a chronological aspect to the items put on a blog page. Like a log, they are arranged, most often, in a reverse-chronological order. Items that have been most recently posted to the blog are put at the top, pushing earlier postings down. Items are commonly time/date stamped along with the name of the person who posted the item.

What makes blogs different than other web pages are the way in which they are produced and the interaction and dissemination features that are commonly used in blogs. Many blogs include comment features that enable readers to publicly post their comments and participate in strings of dialog with other readers on the posted topics. Bloggers also have a sophisticated network of interlinking reports (trackbacks) and cross-linking blogs (blog rolling). All of these characteristics combine to result in frequently updated and dynamic web sites. It's not surprising that search engines often rank blogs very high in searches. They fit well into the

common ranking algorithm factors of freshness of material and validation via links from other sites.

There are many blog software options; some reside on the desktop, others on the web. Many are free. The most popular of the scores of blog software providers is <http://www.blogger.com>, which was recently purchased by Google, the large search engine company (note the search connection). A simple three-step process is all that it takes to create a free blog via Blogger.com; in just three minutes, you can have your own blog online. Each posting thereafter takes just a minute (or less if you use the "email to post" option). You can host the blog at the blogspot site (where it will be subject to banner advertising) or on your web server. Either way, the setup is fast and the service is free.

Applications of Blogs in Education

Perhaps the simplest application of blogs is for an instructor to send material to all students (and the entire world for that matter). For example, I teach a seminar in emerging electronic technologies with an emphasis on educational technologies. I blog the readings for the class online through two blogs: Techno-News <http://people.uis.edu/rschr1/blogger.html> and Online Learning Update <http://people.uis.edu/rschr1/onlinelearning/blogger.html>. Students read my brief synopses and choose whether to follow the link to the entire report.

A step up in use of blogs is to enable

Have a great idea for a newsletter article?

Send submissions to:
Steve Garren
sgarren@lakeland.cc.il.us

students to post their own works. In a poetry or creative writing class, students can be given a logon to post items to the blog. They can post their original work so that others in the class (and the world) may read and use the comment feature to critique the compositions. At this level, another use may be for students to work together on group projects, choosing to share the blog with experts and others who might contribute to their class projects.

One of the most exciting uses of blogs is to enable students in similar classes at different institutions to interact and share their work. For example, instructors at two different colleges could share a blog, enter their combined student rosters as team bloggers, and encourage interaction between the two classes. This kind of activity can bring together dispersed and diverse students, enriching both classes.

Most blogging software has a built-in RSS or Atom generator. RSS, commonly called Rich Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication and its newer cousin, Atom, provide news feeds to all who have newsreaders. As with blogs, most of the newsreaders are free or very inexpensive. They allow students to quickly and efficiently scan for new postings without even pointing their web browser to the blog website.

Entire online classes can be offered through blogging technology. Faculty members can construct their own blog-based classes using free or inexpensive blog technologies, or they can turn to the growing blog software industry for a turnkey package. One relatively new company, Covidia <http://www.covidia.com/>, offers a relatively sophisticated hosted blogging suite designed to provide tools for all of the basic online classroom needs for less than ten dollars a month per course!

The potential for blogging in education is huge. New applications for blogs are being tried at colleges around the world every day. , for example has a plethora of blogs hosted at just their Law School <http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/directory/36/harvardWeblogs/harvardhostedWeblogs>.

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Blogs, cont.

Isn't it time that you tried out this hot new application that costs so little, yet has the potential to provide cost-effective, interactive engagement of students?

Note: I have no financial or other interests in any of the commercial sites mentioned in the article.

*Ray Schroeder, Director
Office of Technology-Enhanced Learning
University of Illinois at Springfield*

Waubonsee Searches for Mastodon Bones



Around 10,000 years ago, shortly before they were to become extinct, mastodons, large Ice-Age mammals that are distant relatives of modern elephants, roamed what is now the Aurora area, an area where the last glaciers were just melting.

Seventy years ago, as a way to keep jobs from becoming extinct during the Great Depression, the Civil Works Administration was created, with one of its crews assigned to the Phillips Park Lake Excavation Project in Aurora. It was during that dig, in January of 1934, that mastodon bones were discovered in the park's Townsend Lake, forever after known as "Mastodon Lake."

And this summer, another chapter in Aurora's mastodon story is being written, as Waubonsee Community College, the City of Aurora, the Illinois State Museum, and the Illinois State Geological Survey team up in an effort to excavate remaining bones of the animal that gave the lake its nickname. The project is being funded by a \$60,000 grant from the City of Aurora.

The dig, which began in May, is sched-

uled to end on August 8, and as of the first week of July, scientists, students and volunteers hadn't yet unearthed any mastodon bones but had found some other treasures, including 13,000-year-old logs and sticks, ten species of snail shells, a variety of small animal and fish bones, and a bottle marked "Chum" dated 1895.

There is still plenty of time to find the mastodon bones, but in any case, it's the excavation experience that is the most important.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to participate in an excavation of a real-life fossil," said David Voorhees, Earth Science/Geology instructor at Waubonsee and the college's lead instructor for the Mastodon Project. "This could be the pivotal event in students' educational and scientific careers."

Students could enroll in either an 11-week or 8-week version of an Earth Science Special Topics course; the latter was designed to accommodate the schedules of area teachers who want to enroll. Teachers could also take advantage of a noncredit class that provides 15 hours of Continuing Professional Development Unit (CPDU) credit, while their younger students could enroll in one of several Programs for Youth offerings planned by the college's Community Education department.

But taking a class is not the only way to become involved in this community-wide science project. Many area residents have volunteered their time to this history-making endeavor.

People who are interested in mastodons, but not interested in getting dirty, are invited to visit the site and observe the dig work. A docent-led tour of the site, which will utilize Phillips Park's new tram, will depart from the park's Visitors Center at 2 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Take a virtual tour of the dig site by reading the daily journal of the project's field director, Jim Oliver, of the Illinois State Museum. His journal will be posted on the Mastodon Project Web site, which is accessible through Waubonsee's home page at www.waubonsee.edu.

Internet visitors will also get the latest news about the dig, including information on any bone finds.

Waubonsee Community College

If you have any comments or questions about the ILCCO newsletter, or would like information regarding article submissions, please contact:

**Steve Garren,
ILCCO Fiscal
Coordinator at**

sgarren@lakeland.cc.il.us

or call

(217) 234-5459

Course Management Software Summit

A summit meeting on course management systems, hosted by NILRC, will take place on the campus of Parkland College in Champaign, Illinois on Friday, August 6, 2004, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The purpose of the meeting is to review 3 alternative systems to Blackboard and WebCT. Presentations will be made by Moodle, Angel, and The Sakai Project. A panel session of faculty members, administrators, IT managers and LRC dean or directors will also be held as well as a discussion session. The invitation is open to all Illinois higher education institutions. A registration form and details are available here. Please register by July 23. Cost of the event is \$25 to cover lunch.

Moodle is open source, freely modifiable and distributable under terms of a GNU General Public License. It

runs under Unix, Linux, Windows, Mac OS X, any system that supports PHP. (<http://moodle.org/>) Angel (<http://cyberlearninglabs.com/>) is an open system with an open architecture, though it is not technically an 'open course environment.' The Sakai Project (<http://www.sakaiproject.org/>) is a Mellon Foundation funded open source initiative of the University of Michigan, Indiana University, MIT, Stanford, with the uPortal consortium to integrate and synchronize their considerable educational software into a pre-integrated collection of open source tools.

A survey of NILRC community college members revealed that members are facing substantial cost increases for course management systems, in some cases as much as 25%. NILRC has over the last 30 years worked on a number of collaborative community college projects. NILRC is interested in seeking grant funding to investigate, plan

and propose a plan to support the development of an open source, common course management software platform perhaps using one of the above solutions as a basic platform.

NILRC would like to discuss the possibility of a grant to create a standard open source product that could be used as a less expensive yet more powerful tool to support online learning in Illinois.

NILRC is a consortium of community colleges located primarily in Illinois.

If you are interested in attending, please see the registration form and details here.

For more information, contact John Berry, Executive Director, NILRC, at jberry@nilrc.org



Registration Form

Course Management Software Summit
Friday, August 6, 2004
Parkland College, Champaign, Illinois
10 AM - 3 PM

Name: _____

Title: _____

Institution: _____

Registration fee is \$25 to cover the cost of lunch. Box lunches will be available at noon.

Make checks payable to NILRC and mail to: **NILRC Buisness Office**
P.O. Box 120
Blanchardville, WI 53516

Space is limited, so please register July 23, 2004.

You may also confirm a spot by e-mail to jberry@nilrc.org or lsikora@nilrc.org