On July 1, the Center for Distributed Learning (CDL), Course Development & Web Services (CDWS), and the Research Initiative for Teaching Effectiveness (RITE) combined into a single organization under the CDL banner.

The goal of the consolidation was to increase the collective unit’s effectiveness and efficiency, working more closely together to align distributed learning policy with course production and assessment. Although the units consolidated, their services will continue uninterrupted and all existing points of contact remain unchanged.

“This is an exciting opportunity for us to take a fresh look at how we develop, deliver and assess distributed learning here at UCF,” says Thomas Cavanagh, who oversees the unit. “By all measures, we have been extremely successful over the years building the university’s distributed learning capabilities. This consolidation is an opportunity to examine how we can improve our collaboration with colleges, departments and faculty members to build on that success for the future.”

On Sept. 18, the third annual Knight 4 Gaming — a display of entertainment, gaming and technology — took place in the Pegasus Ballroom at UCF, where students experienced the fun and play for free. They also competed in Halo 3, Gears of War 2 and Beatles: Rock Band tournaments, presented by the UCF Computer Store, to win prizes.

Technology, prizes and giveaways were provided by Apple, Sprint, Dell and other sponsors.

Since 2007, Knight 4 Gaming has been committed to providing fun and entertainment to a large audience.

Gomory Scholarship Winners

In September 2008, UCF was selected as a recipient of the Ralph E. Gomory Award for Quality Online Education.

The university was awarded $5,000 to be used to fund scholarships to students enrolled in online programs. Ten $500 scholarships were divided among undergraduate and graduate students.

To be eligible for the scholarship, students were required to submit a 250-word essay about the value of online education in their lives. Essays were evaluated on impact, quality of writing and clarity.

This year’s Gomory scholarship winners are:

Undergraduate:
- Kevin Anglin – Radiological Sciences

Graduate:
- Christine DiSturco – Health Svcs. Admin.
- Tonya Goodson – Nursing
- Lisa Johnson – Interdisciplinary Studies
- Cindy Nelly – Nursing

Each year, the Ralph E. Gomory Award for Quality Online Education is presented by the Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C) to an institution that has demonstrated its commitment to assessing and improving the quality of its online education programs through quantitative application of the five Sloan-C Quality Pillars on which quality online education is based: access, learning effectiveness, scale, student satisfaction and faculty satisfaction.

Ralph E. Gomory became the president of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation in 1989 after a long and distinguished career at IBM. During his tenure, he led the Sloan Foundation into numerous fields relevant to major national issues. The foundation supported pioneering work in the field of online learning before there was even a public Internet, and then supported its growth so that by 2007, more than 3.5 million people were enrolled annually in online courses in higher education in the United States. He was instrumental in the formation of the Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C).

In December 2007, Gomory became president emeritus of the Sloan Foundation.
Computer Services & Telecommunications was recently informed by Oracle Corp. that UCF has been selected to participate in early adopter upgrade programs for the PeopleSoft Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Financials applications.

The early adopter program will provide UCF with enhanced support resources to enable the university to migrate to the latest releases of our key business applications.

Additionally, UCF will be participating in PeopleSoft CRM 9.1 and Financials 9.1 Upgrade Focus Groups.

Current plans target a spring 2009 go-live date for the Financials application upgrade and a fall 2009 go live date for CRM.

UCF previously participated in the Oracle Early Success Program for the PeopleSoft Financials upgrade to version 8.9. The project was a collaborative effort between UCF and Oracle beginning in October 2006. The project was to upgrade the production Financials application 8.0 version to the latest 8.9 version. The project life cycle included interactive design and prototyping sessions for reviewing new functionality, development and testing of the new features. A comprehensive upgrade and launch of end-user training helped prepare the UCF user community for the upgrade rollout. The team successfully met their go-live of May 1, 2006.

University of Central Florida faculty, staff and students on the UCF/Lake-Sumter Community College’s (LSCC) South Lake Campus in Clermont are now enjoying access to a beautiful, new 50,000-square-foot, joint-use facility. The Cooper Memorial Library at LSCC, which opened on Aug. 17, is a partnership project between Lake County, LSCC and UCF.

UCF Librarian Min Tong works along with public and community college librarians to serve a variety of patrons. The Reference Desk on the second floor allows easy access to special collections in law and genealogy, as well as technology labs and study rooms. The first floor houses a bookstore, coffee shop, fiction collection, youth area and a children’s garden and story room. The melding of public and academic collections is especially beneficial to UCF programs in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education and Sports Fitness.

The Cooper Memorial Library is a partnership between Lake County, Lake-Sumter Community College and UCF.

Online learning continues to grow in popularity among UCF students, according to the following data provided by the Center for Distributed Learning (CDL):

- Fully online web courses (W) and mixed mode blended courses (M) account for approximately 17 percent of the university’s total student credit-hour production.
- Fully online web (W) courses grew approximately 31 percent from fall 2008 to fall 2009.
- Half of all UCF students took at least one online course in the past year.

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The days of having to keep an eye out for an available group study room in the library are over, thanks to a new system of restaurant-style pagers that can be checked out at the Circulation Desk. There are 15 pagers available for library building-use only, since the range of the pagers is limited.

Before going to the main library, students can also check http://library.ucf.edu/Systems/FacilityAvailability.asp to see which study rooms and computers are available.
Susan Wegmann, assistant professor in the College of Education, was selected as the recipient of the 2009 Sloan-C Award for Excellence in Online Teaching.

“The competition for this award was particularly strong this year, and the selection committee felt that Wegmann’s nomination was exemplary,” said Burks Oakley, chair of the awards selection committee for the Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C).

Wegmann received this honor “for designing innovative online educational environments that encourage students to become active participants in authentic learning by emphasizing critical thinking, creativity and information fluency.”

“I constantly worry about the quality of my online teaching since, sometimes, this format is criticized,” says Wegmann. “I consider teaching a craft. By that, I mean each semester, in fact, each day, I modify and respond to my students’ needs and concerns. This award asked for evidence that my students were learning and enjoying the content of my course. So, it was encouraging to gather the data and letters from students and administrators who support my work.”

Wegmann says she tries to schedule at least one face-to-face course each year because she feels like that kind of interaction is her strength. However, this semester, she is teaching fully online.

“The connections I feel with my students, the bantering about the content, the fact that even the most introverted and shy student has just as much opportunity to interact and participate as any other student” is her favorite thing about teaching online. But on the other hand, she says she also misses the face-to-face “act” and seeing her students’ faces around campus.

How does Wegmann see the future of online teaching? She says she thinks it will evolve into mobile environments, where students can take course content with them on their cell phones, iPods, etc. She also thinks it should evolve in the area of real-time interaction.

“Right now, I use Second Life to meet (three times a semester) with students for a real-time experience,” she explains. “It’s a bit awkward, but in the future, I see us having more fluid real-time interaction events. This way, we can capture more of the teacher-to-student, as well as student-to-student interactions, which I feel are at the core of great teaching.

Wegmann is an assistant professor in the Reading Program area and currently teaches Content Area Reading, in both undergraduate and graduate classes, which teaches reading strategies that students will put to use in content areas such as science education, social science education, math education, English education and art education.

For more information about the Sloan Consortium’s awards program, visit www.sloanconsortium.org/aboutus/awards.asp.

The UCF Libraries offer several notable e-Book collections, with titles in disciplines from history to medicine to technology and more.

**e-Book collections quick facts:**
Number of e-Books in UCF’s collection: 235,000

Number of times full e-Book text books were used during 2008-09: 66,000

Oldest title: Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye by Raoul Lefèvre (published in 1473) – Early English Books Online

Newest title: Reading and Writing the Electronic Book (published October 2009) – Synthesis Digital Library

**Most used title by UCF:** Research for Nurses: Methods and Interpretations (accessed 1,726 times) – netLibrary

**e-Book collections for disciplines include:**
- General and Multidisciplinary:
  - netLibrary (largest — more than 50,000 titles at every academic level)
- Humanities:
  - Early English Books Online
  - Evans Digital
  - Gutenberg-e
  - Gale Literature Criticism Online
- Medicine and Psychology:
  - Access Medicine
  - Access Pharmacy
  - MD Consult
- PsycBooks
- R2 – Health Sciences Books
- Thieme ElectronicBook Library
- Reference:
  - Credo Reference
  - Gale’s Ready Reference Shelf
  - Gale’s Virtual Reference Library
  - Testing and Education Reference Center Basic
- Science and Technology:
  - Springer Lecture Notes
  - Synthesis Digital Library

ITG Offers Support to Faculty Who Teach Online

There are many technical support resources for faculty at the University of Central Florida. However, the Instructional Technology Group (ITG) (http://itg.cdws.ucf.edu) specializes in supporting the software that allows faculty and staff to provide online learning experiences for their students. Part of the Center for Distributed Learning’s Course Development & Web Services department, ITG was created in June of 2006 to provide immediate and personal support for online faculty. Led by Elisabeth Greenwood, ITG provides technical support by phone and e-mail, and in scheduled face-to-face sessions, open support labs and general training workshops.

Focused on the “how-to” of teaching online, ITG provides training and documentation that addresses common needs: How do I upload a quiz? How do I rearrange columns in my grade book? What do I do if I get an error in one of my courses? How do I use eCommunity to connect with my students?

ITG offers phone and e-mail support Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 407-823-0407 or itg@mail.ucf.edu. ITG also provides evening and weekend support via e-mail, so faculty do not need to wait until the next business day to receive assistance. These services are available to all UCF faculty and staff who assist with online courses, including teaching assistants and graduate teaching assistants.

Teaching Online
In addition to call-in support, ITG provides both face-to-face and online workshop opportunities for UCF faculty and staff. The Teaching Online website (http://teach.ucf.edu) is a compendium of resources and procedures for UCF faculty who teach online courses. There are links to other support resources on campus, as well as the current Open Support Lab and training workshop schedules. Training workshops are conducted face-to-face on the Orlando campus, or online using Adobe Connect. To check the Open Support Lab schedule or request a Training Workshop (face-to-face or online), please visit http://teach.ucf.edu/resources/training.

Webcourses@UCF Workshops
This series of workshops focuses on key tools in Webcourses@UCF. Attend one session for an in-depth exploration of the tips and tricks for a specific area, or attend all six workshops for a thorough understanding of all that Webcourses@UCF can offer. Workshop subjects include: Communicating with Students, Mastering the Grade Book, Creating and Managing Assessments, Creating and Managing Groups and Assignments, Presenting Content, and Managing Your Course.

Open Support Labs
Open Support Labs allow faculty and staff to work within your online course and receive assistance on Webcourses@UCF. You do not need to sign up ahead of time to visit an open lab, and you can stop by at any time, up until 30 minutes before the end of the session, for assistance.

How-To
This page (http://teach.ucf.edu/webcourses/faq) provides step-by-step directions for the most common functions in Webcourses@UCF, allowing faculty to view and print on their own schedule, and answers some of the most common questions asked about online courses at UCF.

Academic Resources
The myUCF portal (https://my.ucf.edu) also provides faculty support materials, including a PDF of the complete Webcourses@UCF manual. To access these resources, log into the portal and click “Academic Resources” on the myUCF menu.

Holiday Schedule
ITG support is available every day of the year, with the exception of days that the UCF Orlando campus is closed. This December, ITG will continue to offer e-mail response while the campus is closed. The exact support schedule will be posted to ITG’s web page (http://itg.cdws.ucf.edu) closer to the holiday break.

For more information about any of ITG’s support and services, please call 407-823-0407 or e-mail itg@mail.ucf.edu.

New Writing Center Hours

Over the summer, University Writing Center (UWC) consultants began holding office hours in library Room 359. Based on the success of that service, hours were expanded for the fall semester.

Library Room 359 is currently open (and consultants are available) from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Fridays. Students can also make an appointment at www.uwc.ucf.edu.

During midterms, the writing center participated in CRAM 4 the Exam, hosted by the Student Government Association. During that stressful, yet fun, time, writing center consultants were available to help students with their papers and writing assignments. They also presented a workshop called “How to Succeed in Writing Without Really Trying.”

UWC hours in the library help to provide “one-stop shopping” for students writing papers since resources, research assistance from librarians and writing assistance from UWC consultants are all in one location.

Information Technologies & Resources Websites

Center for Distributed Learning | http://online.ucf.edu
Computer Services | http://cst.ucf.edu
Course Development & Web Services | http://cdws.ucf.edu
IT&R | http://itr.ucf.edu
Library | http://library.ucf.edu
Office of Instructional Resources | http://www.oir.ucf.edu
Research Initiative for Teaching Effectiveness | http://rite.ucf.edu
Telecommunications | http://www.telecom.ucf.edu