Classroom Building II Opening

Classroom Building II (CB2), which will soon go into regular service, includes seven large classrooms ranging in size from 125 to 450 seats, and is the new home for the Army and Air Force ROTC.

Among the standout features of Classroom Building II are the high-definition, multimedia-integrated classrooms, designed and installed by the Office of Instructional Resources (OIR). Each room features the latest Crestron Digital Media control systems, capable of full 1080p HD video signal processing and display. These rooms will provide both instructors and students with a greatly enhanced audio-visual experience.

OIR has also collaborated with the UCF Human-Computer Interactions Lab (HCI), directed by Si Jung “Jun” Kim, to create a new graphical user interface for all classroom media control systems. The HCI Lab conducted a research study, resulting in a new user-friendly graphical interface for all CB2 touch panels. This new touch panel design will be implemented across campus as rooms are upgraded to the new HD standard.

ROTC, which up until now has been housed in trailers next to the Recreation and Wellness Center, will have several new spaces in Classroom Building II. The secure ROTC wing will include a 1,236-square-foot, high-definition, multimedia-integrated Multipurpose Space, a 1,533-square-foot Virtual Battle Lab, and numerous conference rooms equipped with Cisco TelePresence video conferencing systems.

Obojobo Wins National Award

A UCF-developed online platform for creating, sharing, and distributing instructional materials is one of three 2013 national award winners for educational innovation as chosen recently by the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET). Obojobo was recognized with the annual WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) Award, which is presented to colleges, universities and other organizations for exceptionally creative, technology-based solutions to a significant problem or need in higher education.

Obojobo was created by the Center for Distributed Learning (CDL) as a platform for distributing quality online instructional resources across the university. The system offers embedded design support, templates, and other features to make creation and distribution of consistently high-quality, reusable digital learning materials convenient for faculty and staff.

“Obojobo’s core design focuses on assessable content that is targeted, succinct, and, as a result, highly reusable,” said Ian Turgeon, a CDL web application developer. “Our vision comes from the simple idea that many instructors are teaching the same subject with the same content, and reinventing it every semester. By establishing a community of educators and giving them a platform to interact with this content, they could collaborate to build some truly fantastic things.”

 Visitors from Sweden

In June, Chuck Dziuban, Patsy Moskal and Tom Cavanagh, of UCF’s Center for Distributed Learning, were contacted by Åsa Bergenheim, president of Karlstad University (KU) in Sweden. Because Karlstad University works extensively with blended learning, she wanted to meet with faculty members and show her colleagues UCF. (Bergenheim previously visited UCF with a group of faculty leaders while she was provost of Umeå University.)

On Sept. 12, Bergenheim and eight of her faculty members met with various UCF faculty members to discuss UCF’s blended learning programs. In addition, the group met with faculty and students in music education, student government, TeachLive, and alumni and fundraising, and toured the Knowledge Commons and Technology Commons.

Pictured from left (back row): Kenneth Nordgren, KU dean, Faculty Board for Teacher Education; Patrik Larsson, KU dean, Faculty for Arts and Humanities; Johnny Johansson, KU Student Government president; and Tom Cavanagh, UCF-CDL associate vice president. Pictured from left (front row): Louise Pålsson, KU assistant university director; Dan Guttké, KU project manager for fundraising; Anne-Christine Larsson, KU university director; Bo Edvardsson, KU vice president; Åsa Bergenheim, KU president; Joel Hartman, UCF-IT&R vice provost and chief information officer; Thomas Blom, KU deputy vice president/library director; and Chuck Dziuban, UCF-CDL director, Research Initiative for Teaching Effectiveness. Not pictured: Maria Nilsson, KU communication officer.

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Obojobo has allowed the John C. Hitt Library, Student Development and Enrollment Services, and other areas to create and share learning resources that faculty anywhere on campus can incorporate into their courses.

The system also collects student performance data for detailed feedback on their learning and is the foundation for several self-paced faculty development programs.

“[Innovation is in Obojobo’s DNA],” said Thomas Cavanagh, associate vice president in charge of the Center for Distributed Learning. “The system’s collaborative nature allows all corners of the university to benefit from a good idea, allowing it to be shared instantly with everyone.”

Data show that since the implementation of the system in 2008, Obojobo has been used by more than 64,500 people. The number of times that the UCF faculty has shared online modules has increased by 60 percent each of the past two years, and the number of assessments completed by students has reached 300,000.

Several higher education institutions and associations that want to adopt Obojobo and its modules have approached the Center for Distributed Learning. “We are exploring licensing options to be able to share and collaborate with other institutions who might be interested in co-developing additional Obojobo features,” said Francisca Yonekura, associate department head.

UCF faculty members can access Obojobo at http://obojobo.ucf.edu by using their NID and password.

“There’s a robust level of innovation and creativity that schools are applying toward the overarching goals of quality and student success,” said Ben Zastrocky, chair of the WOW Award committee and director of the Educational Technology Center at Metropolitan State University of Denver. “The 2013 WOW projects have one, interesting common theme: utilizing technologies to increase efficiencies in the teaching and learning process so that faculty can focus on their job No. 1 — teaching, assessing student progress, engaging with students.”

The awardees were recognized during WCET’s annual meeting of higher-education educators Nov. 13-15 in Denver.
New Mobile Apps for Webcourses@UCF

Instructure has released a new mobile app for Webcourses@UCF (Canvas). The new app includes the following enhancements:

- Access to course modules
- Ability for students to take quizzes
- Course homepage consistent with web version
- New dashboard with grade peeking (allows a student to quickly “peek” at his/her total grade from the course list on the dashboard of the app)
- Upgraded course navigation, which includes access to Canvas apps
- Assignment submissions (new to Android)
- Android home screen widget

If you currently use Canvas for iOS, we recommend you download Canvas by Instructure. Please note that if you are currently using an iPad, continue to use Canvas for iOS. A new iPad version of Canvas by Instructure will be available soon. If you are an Android user, download the new app or upgrade to Canvas for Android on your device.

For more information or to download Canvas by Instructure, please visit http://onlinesupport.cdl.ucf.edu/webcourses/ucfmobile.

New Head of Curriculum Materials Center

The library is pleased to announce that Yolanda Hood has joined UCF as head of the Curriculum Materials Center (CMC).

Hood received her MLS degree from North Carolina Central University, Durham. She earned a Ph.D. in English at the University of Missouri, Columbia. Her professional library career began as a reference librarian at Valdosta State University and, most recently, as youth librarian at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls.

Hood is published in several refereed journals, has given many presentations regionally and nationally, written several successful grants, and was named American Library Association (ALA) 2009 Emerging Leader. She is also a member of the Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of ALA, and ALAN (Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of the National Council of Teachers of English).

Heart Walk Raised Funds and Spirits

Did you know that cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 killer of Americans? The American Heart Association leads the fight against heart disease and stroke in many ways — through research, public and professional education, and advocacy. UCF supports the American Heart Association, and its efforts, through participation in the annual Heart Walk.

This past September was the first time UCF has hosted the Heart Walk on campus. Along with many others from UCF, IT&R departments pitched in to help UCF raise a total of $46,130.

With the help of family and friends, CS&T raised $975 in donations, the Center for Distributed Learning (CDL) raised $932, and the Libraries raised $2,600.

The more supporters, contributors, and walkers, the greater is our impact to reduce cardiovascular diseases and stroke.

Meet the Subject Librarians

Subject librarians assist students at all levels with curriculum and research assignments. They are available in person, online, and by phone for consultations on how to find and use the best information for research projects and academic assignments.

Subject librarians are also available to assist faculty members by providing research instruction sessions for their courses and by creating course-specific web-based research guides. In addition, they can provide assistance to faculty members in their own research endeavors, and serve as a link to collection development for academic programs.

Furthermore, subject librarians help to connect UCF constituencies with scholarly publishing information and assistance that is provided by the UCF Libraries’ Scholarly Communication unit.

Read more about each of the subject librarians at http://library.ucf.edu/SubjectLibrarians.

Order of the Baton Award

The Circulation Department of the John C. Hitt Library was selected by UCF Organization Development & Training (OD&T) to receive the Order of the Baton award at the annual OD&T Recognition Ceremony on Oct. 15. The award recognizes the Circulation Department’s work and commitment to outstanding customer service through ongoing strategic efforts, teamwork, and both external and internal evaluation studies.

The department conducted an internal patron satisfaction survey during the spring 2013 semester and also conducted a Mystery Shopper project through OD&T during the summer 2013 semesters, then used both tools to evaluate customer service and as a training tool for improvement.
Libraries Join SCOAP3

The Open Access (OA) tenets of granting unrestricted access to the results of publicly funded research are in contrast with current models of scientific publishing, where access is restricted to journal customers. At the same time, subscription cost increases put considerable strain on libraries, forcing them to cancel an increasing number of journal subscriptions. This situation is particularly acute in fields such as High Energy Physics (HEP), where timely pre-prints describing scientific results are available online. There is a growing concern within the academic community that the future of high-quality journals, and the peer-review system that supports them, is at risk.

To address this situation for HEP, a new model for OA publishing has emerged: SCOAP3 (Sponsoring Consortium for Open Access Publishing in Particle Physics). In this model, HEP funding agencies and libraries, which today purchase journal subscriptions to implicitly support the peer-review service, federate to explicitly cover its cost, while publishers make the electronic versions of their journals free to read. Authors are not directly charged to publish their articles OA.

SCOAP3 will, for the first time, link quality and price, stimulating competition and enabling considerable medium- and long-term savings. Today, most publishers quote a price in the range of 1,000–2,000 Euros per published article. On this basis, we estimate that the annual budget for the transition of HEP publishing to OA would amount to a maximum of 10 million Euros per year, sensibly lower than the estimated global expenditure in subscription to HEP journals.

Each SCOAP3 partner will finance its contribution by canceling journal subscriptions. Each country will contribute according to its share of HEP publishing. The transition to OA will be facilitated by the fact that the large majority of HEP articles are published in just six peer-reviewed journals.

The example of SCOAP3 could be rapidly followed by other fields, directly related to HEP, such as nuclear physics or astroparticle physics, also similarly compact and organized with a reasonable number of journals.

Current U.S. membership, which includes nearly all SUS institutions, can be found here: http://scoap3.org/scoap3us_alpha.html.

For more information, visit http://scoap3.org/about.html, or contact Michael Arthur at 407-882-0143 or michael.arthur@ucf.edu.

Data Recovery and Protection Update

In the event that the on-campus data center is damaged or inoperable, Computer Services and Telecommunications (CS&T) is prepared to protect the critical data needed for UCF’s business operations thanks to these standard practices:

• Oracle Data Guard software securely sends updates of the PeopleSoft production databases and other critical data to the business resumption location at an out-of-state facility.
• Monthly tape images of all server backups are sent to a local data storage company for secure preservation.

To enhance the data protection plan, CS&T recently enhanced the capabilities of the out-of-state data protection facility by:

• Adding the ability to replicate data over the network shortly after the data is backed up at UCF
• Adding the ability to replicate very large Microsoft/VMWARE file systems that are technically challenging to restore from backup media
• Setting up a remote master backup server and tape library to be used for data recovery if needed
• Making additional networking improvements to the systems located out of state, and expanded our remote VMWARE server capabilities

Now that these hardware changes are complete, the CS&T staff, working with storage partners, will begin backup and restoration testing. This process will take most of the remaining calendar year to complete and will position the department to recovery data quickly at the business resumption location and more rapidly restore UCF business systems if needed.