IT&R Staff Recognized for Excellence

The 2014 IT&R Employee Recognition Award event was held May 6 in the Pegasus Ballroom. Award recipients were:

Outstanding Service — Ryan Seilhamer
As an instructional designer, Ryan’s primary responsibilities are to provide course development and design guidance for UCF faculty. However, his leadership of the CDL Mobile Initiative Team represents a move beyond his daily responsibilities. Since the initiative’s inception in 2010, Ryan has made a major impact on the university with his leadership, research and partnership. Ryan has been active in the UCF mobile landscape to help build a community that supports mobile technology on campus. Ryan has not only led the UCFMobile initiative, but is emerging as a national figure in the mobile learning space.

Outstanding Innovator — Jason Musick
Computer Services and Telecommunications has been working on several large and challenging campus initiatives, including the campus data network core upgrade and the campus-wide Distributed Antenna System (DAS) to enhance cellular and public safety service on campus. Some of the projects lacked one unique and critical resource before they could be constructed: a true mesh fiber optic backbone. These projects faced a key obstacle: certain underground conduit segments no longer had space for the required fiber optic cables.

Jason immediately thought outside the box. After contacting several vendors, he discovered a new product called Maxcell MaxSpace that could potentially meet the need but was untested in an application like ours. Jason arranged for UCF to be a test site; the test was successful and was deployed to complete the core network project. The new technology saved UCF $140,000 in 2013 and is expected to save another $120,000 in 2014.

2014-2015 Tech Fee

The deadline to submit request for quotes from the following departments is June 30, 2014:

- Office of Instructional Resources — For new or upgraded multimedia classroom installations
- Network Services — For new or upgraded wired or wireless network installations
- Facilities Improvement — For facility improvement or renovations

The 2014-2015 Tech Fee Request for Proposals will be released on August 1, 2014. The proposal Submission Deadline is September 22, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.

Lync Go Live

Microsoft Lync is a communications tool that supports a wide array of communication and collaboration modes, including:

- Instant messaging (IM)
- Audio, video, and web conferencing
- Presence (availability) awareness
- On-and off-campus access
- Mobile access
- Desktop sharing
- Online meetings

In early summer 2014, the CS&T enterprise messaging team will begin working with departmental IT staff to update current Lync 2010 user accounts to Lync 2013. Lync software versions are backward compatible, so new versions can be installed at any time. All Lync accounts will start out with only instant messaging capabilities, and the additional collaboration features will be enabled at a later time. For additional information on Lync, please contact your unit’s IT department or the UCF Service Desk.

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UCFMobile 3.0

In March, the UCFMobile smartphone app was updated with additional features and a new look for Android and iOS. The upgrade includes a redesigned campus map app. In addition to the existing buildings search, users can now search nearly 300 points of interest on campus to find departments, dining, events, housing, labs, recreation, retail, and services.

The iOS version also includes a virtual tour of the main campus. Other new features include quick access to UCF shuttle information and Knights email.

UCFMobile is available for iOS and Android devices. Students and faculty can download the application for free in their device’s app store by searching for UCFMobile.

For more information, visit:
http://ucfmobile.ucf.edu

Remedy Go Live

We all need technical assistance from time to time. Traditionally, that has meant calling or sending an email to one (or more) of the various campus help desks, which can be frustrating.

Computer Service and Telecommunications (CS&T) is pleased to announce the April 1 release of the enterprise Remedy IT Service Management (ITSM) application to the UCF community. Remedy ITSM is an easy-to-use service management application. Staff, faculty and students can now submit IT service requests online and easily track their status.

As part of a three-phase project, CS&T has automated 115 typical request types, based on a set of work flows, which will reduce the time required to act on support requests. As part of phase one, all classroom support requests have been automated and routed to the appropriate college IT team through Remedy ITSM.

Remedy ITSM will bring several new benefits to the university community as it is deployed:
- the Remedy software is hosted with the vendor as a cloud service, reducing local support costs;
- automated work flows within the application will lead to faster resolution times for customers;
- the user interface is easy to navigate; and
- all IT service requests processed through Remedy will be tracked.

Remedy (ITSM) can be found on the main CS&T website at: http://www.cst.ucf.edu or http://www.cst.ucf.edu/submit-a-ticket

Data Protection

The preservation and protection of critical UCF data is a very high priority for Information Technologies & Resources. Computer Services & Telecommunications (CS&T) has recently implemented technology to replicate backup images of specific servers to the university’s business continuity center in another state. CS&T has also implemented technology to snapshot (rapid copy) certain server images from our storage systems to offsite locations. These changes are intended to replicate our most business-critical data for use if needed to restore business operations.

In more detail, the data protection changes were in two technical areas — backup image management and storage replication. The image management project implemented automated lifecycle policies to replicate certain server backups to the offsite location. On the storage replication side, CS&T replicated server images to the offsite location.

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Outstanding Collaboration — Rachel Mulvihill, Beth Nettles, John Venecek, Robin Chan, Kelvin Thompson, Susan Hicks, Brent Shaw, Kerlene King, Patti McCall, Renee Montgomery, Corinne Bishop, Jonathan Pizzo

(Libraries and Center for Distributed Learning collaboration with Writing and Rhetoric Department in the College of Arts and Humanities)

The Library Research Strategies course is an online introductory library course. To address an unmet instructional need for ENC1102 and SLS1501 classes, librarians and library staff conceived the course in spring 2013. Learning how to locate and use information sources is an essential part of the foundation students must have to be successful in their academic work. However, as the ratio of students to librarians continues to escalate, the library was finding it increasingly difficult to support face-to-face instruction for those classes.

There were 2,778 students enrolled in the spring 2014 course and other academic areas of the university have asked to also be included. None of this would have been possible without the collaboration of the Center for Distributed Learning and Library teams in the creation and support of the Information Literacy modules.

(Left to right:) Susan Hicks, Kelvin Thompson, Brent Shaw, Kerlene King, Jonathan Pizzo, Robin Chan, John Venecek, Rachel Mulvihill and Renee Montgomery (Not pictured: Patti McCall, Corinne Bishop and Beth Nettles)
RESNET Upgraded and Expanded

Most UCF employees are not aware that there are multiple campus networks. UCF Residence Halls Network (RESNET) is an autonomous campus network that spans the Orlando campus, extending to some remote sites. Like the main UCF campus network, RESNET is large and complex, incorporating several core switches, over 100 edge switches, and more than 1,000 wireless access points — all distributed over 65 different buildings. RESNET serves more than 7,000 residence hall students and provides connectivity for more than 15,000 devices. In scope, RESNET exceeds the size of smaller institutions’ entire campus networks. As RESNET grows, and as students make more intensive use of UCF and Internet online resources, the demand for bandwidth continues to increase.

To meet the demands of expanded campus housing and an insatiable demand for bandwidth, Computer Services & Telecommunications (CS&T), in cooperation with Housing and Residence Life, is re-designing and upgrading RESNET to provide increased speed, bandwidth, and security. Wireless capacity and coverage are also being greatly expanded. The RESNET upgrade and expansion is scheduled to be completed in May.

MOOC on Blended Learning

UCF and EDUCAUSE, a nonprofit higher education technology association, are collaborating to offer a free MOOC (massive open online course) on how to design effective blended learning courses. “BlendKit 2014 — Becoming a Blended Learning Designer” runs April 21 through May 26, and is available on the Canvas Network at: www.canvas.net/courses/becoming-a-blended-learning-designer

Blended learning (the strategic combination of face-to-face and online learning experiences) is growing in popularity within higher education and K-12 settings around the world. The goal of BlendKit2014 is to help faculty and instructional designers design and develop effective blended learning courses through a consideration of key issues related to blended learning and practical step-by-step guidance in producing materials for a blended course (e.g., developing design documents, creating content pages, and receiving peer feedback).

An EDUCAUSE Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC) grant received by UCF in 2011 leveraged the university’s expertise to create the Blended Learning Toolkit as a free, open resource for educational institutions interested in developing or expanding their blended learning initiatives. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), UCF’s grant partner, distributed the toolkit to its member institutions. The BlendKit MOOC emerged from the grant to assist educators in designing blended courses and has been offered twice since 2012.

Participants may also choose to pursue an official “UCF-EDUCAUSE Certified Blended Learning Designer” credential. Those who choose this more rigorous option will submit materials they develop and pay a nominal fee for a portfolio review. Those who meet portfolio review expectations will earn a certificate from EDUCAUSE and the University of Central Florida, along with a digital badge that can be linked to the participant’s EDUCAUSE profile and displayed on professional and social networks.

This 5-week course includes:

• readings from scholarly works pertaining to blended learning;
• document templates and practical step-by-step “how to” guides;
• blogging and social networking interaction opportunities;
• regular interactions with facilitators and fellow students; and
• expert and peer assessment and critique on design work.

2014 Dziuban Award

The Center for Distributed Learning (CDL) has awarded the third annual Chuck D. Dziuban Award for Excellence in Online Teaching to Stephanie Vie from the Department of Writing and Rhetoric. Along with winning the award, Stephanie received an iPad and a complimentary registration to the fall annual Sloan Consortium International Conference on Online Learning in Orlando. Two Honorable Mentions were also selected: Alisha Janowsky from the Department of Psychology, and Susan Ricci from the College of Nursing.

Stephanie’s Current Topics in Professional Writing course (ENC5930-14) exemplifies a pedagogically sound course and a stellar example of application-based learning with current student-oriented technology.

Named after UCF’s Chuck Dziuban, the annual award recognizes one outstanding UCF faculty member who has taught at least one blended or fully online course within the previous academic year. Dziuban is an internationally acclaimed leader in online learning; he was named UCF’s first Pegasus Professor and is currently a Professor Emeritus. For more info about the award, eligibility and winners, visit: http://award.online.ucf.edu

(Left to right:) Elizabeth Wardle, Stephanie Vie, Lynn Hepner and Tom Cavanagh
University of West Indies Visits CDL

The Center for Distributed Learning hosted a delegation of online learning colleagues from the University of West Indies Open Campus (UWI) February 17-21. Instructional designers Rohan Jowallah and Wendy Howard facilitated this visit.

Prior to the visit, Yasmeen Yusuf-Khalil, head of the Programme Delivery department at UWI, worked with Rohan and Wendy to establish three main objectives:
1. Observe and document effective online learning practices at UCF;
2. Share knowledge and pedagogical best practices for online education; and
3. Establish a collaborative academic research agenda between the two institutions.

While visiting CDL, the UWI team met with staff to discuss topics ranging from course development to video production. The culminating event of their visit was the opportunity to observe the IDL6543 week five parlor sessions with various CDL support service teams. Yasmeen summed up the week by stating, “The level of dedication and professionalism displayed during the week was outstanding and is a model of good practice. I would also like to comment on the warmth and professionalism of all staff during our visit. The staff in CDL was helpful and accommodated our daily needs.”

In the months that followed, six research teams have formed and are designing studies in the following areas: online discussion, supporting quantitative (e.g., STEM) courses, accessibility, LMS systems and technology integration, mobile technology, and virtual teams. The teams are meeting monthly via web conferencing to arrange for publishing and presenting their findings at international conferences and in peer-reviewed journals, ultimately improving the online learning experience for students at both UCF and UWI.

For more information on these projects, contact Rohan Jowallah at rohan.jowallah@ucf.edu, or Wendy Howard at wendy.howard@ucf.edu.

Excellence in Librarianship Award

At UCF’s Founders Day convocation on April 2, 2014, Hal Mendelsohn, reference librarian and patents and trademarks librarian at the John C. Hitt Library, was honored with the 2014 Excellence in Librarianship Award.

Hal joined the UCF Libraries faculty in April 2001 as a reference and library instruction librarian with collection development duties. Later, he took on the role of patents and trademarks librarian. Prior to coming to UCF, Hal was a librarian at the Arnold LeDoux Library at Louisiana State University at Eunice. He received his MLS from San Jose State University.

In October 2012, the Southeastern Library Association (SELA) created the new “Hal Mendelsohn Award” in his honor recognizing continual, dedicated and outstanding service to SELA, and presented the first award to Hal for his “overall service to librarianship and the Southeastern Library Association.”