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THE NEWSLETTER FOR
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CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY

Creating effective learning environments through the use of technology is a strategic goal at Community College of Philadelphia, as reflected in the last two Academic Master Plans and Strategic Master Plans. This is evident by the commitment to technology that was made when new construction has been done, such as in the Center for Business and Industry (CBI) Building, the Northeast Regional Center expansion, and more recently in the Pavilion Building. However, budgeting priorities, rapidly evolving technologies, and infrastructure changes make achieving consistent and ubiquitous access to technology an ongoing challenge.

To address this, in 2012 the Division of Flexible Learning Options and Academic Technology (FLOAT) proposed a classroom technology plan with a specific, simple, and ambitious goal of achieving digital projection in 100% of the 266 centrally-scheduled classrooms—including special-purpose rooms such as labs—within five years. A version of this plan has been approved by the senior administration. The plan started with an inventory, which found that 40% of our classrooms were minimally equipped with technology. At the time, an *Educause* survey found that 80% of the centrally scheduled classrooms at other community colleges had a computer and projector. Since the survey was published, we have made progress, installing technology in another 20 classrooms—including five Smartboards in Fall 2013—and, thanks to a state contribution, in another 13 classrooms in Summer 2014. Combined with rooms that received slightly different upgrades to technology because of varying use, we are now up to 48%. In addition, we are on schedule to install 16 Smartboards over winter break, due to a combination of grant funding from Perkins, as well as a Predominantly Black Institution grant. While the Smartboards have been well received, some classrooms and functions are better suited to other technologies; therefore we have also used short-throw projectors and large, touch-screen monitors when appropriate. *(continued on page 3)*

THE MONITORING REPORT WORK GROUP

At the suggestion of the College's Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Liaison, Dr. Debra Klinman, a Monitoring Report Work Group was formed to assist with the preparation of the report due March 1, 2015. Co-chairs for the group are Abbey Wexler, Department Head for Psychology, Education and Human Services and Judy Gay, Vice President for Academic Affairs. Members of the working group (and their departments) are: Viki Kellar (Foreign Languages); Joseph Kenyon (English), John Moore (Academic Assessment), Cory Ng (Business Administration), Margaret Stephens (Social Science), and Charlene Truex (Allied Health).

The group will be reading relevant sections of College documents starting with the 2004 Self Study, MSCHE visiting team reports, MSCHE actions, and MSCHE documents related to assessment and follow up reports. The work of this group is critical to our success. If anyone is interested in reading the materials, please contact James Stewart in the Office of Academic Affairs (jstewart@ccp.edu).



THE STATE OF ONLINE LEARNING

Recently Sue Hauck, Peter Margolis, and Vaishali Sharma discussed online learning at the College with Dr. Generals. Margolis reported that there has been an average annual growth of 14.7% for online/hybrid course registrations between 2004 and 2014—the only consistent area of enrollment growth at the College. In Fall 2014, there were 5,760 enrollments for 214 online/hybrid course sections. One hundred seventy-six faculty now teach online/hybrid sections. An additional 65% of faculty use Canvas for on-campus courses.

Student outcomes are most positive in hybrid courses. [Institutional Research Report 241](#), for example, shows 82% of students were successful in hybrid courses vs. 66% in online courses and 68% in courses overall. The withdrawal rate was 7% for hybrid courses vs. 15% for online courses and 11% for courses overall. The College data are consistent with national trends.

Hauck, Margolis, and Sharma also discussed the experimental winter term. They stated that they will provide support for the seven online courses to increase the probability of a successful experience for faculty and students.

CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY

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After both rounds of Smartboard installations were completed, the FLOAT division sent a survey to faculty. In Fall 2014 the 140 faculty who were teaching in classrooms with new Smartboards were asked for feedback. Sixty-eight faculty responded (a 48% response rate). When asked to rate their experience with the Technology Enhanced Classroom, 94% said they either “loved it” or it was “OK”, while 6% said they “had not used it.” When asked about specific components they would recommend for future classroom renovations, 97% of the faculty said the Smartboard was either “essential” or “nice to have.” Three percent said it was “not worth the investment.”

While classroom projection is basic for just about any classroom according to our faculty, the College continues to install and improve on other, discipline-specific technologies as well. Examples include:

- * The installation of iMacs for Art labs and classrooms
- * A new laser cutter and 3D printer for Architecture, Design, and Construction
- * Access to web-based legal software for Paralegal Studies
- * Purchase of new digital keyboards for Music
- * An upgraded, secure wireless network and new tablet computers for the Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management program
- * Procurement of measurement probes that are able to interface with computers for Chemistry
- * Acquisition of Smartboard technology for the new Biology lab in the West Building
- * Additional Smartboard technology in both the Organic Chemistry lab and one of the General Chemistry labs

While we are making progress, we still have challenges ahead. One of the biggest is sustainability. For every classroom we upgrade, we need to build in life-cycle planning to replace outdated technology. This is particularly challenging when the initial funding comes from grants, most of which do not continue or provide for upgrading. For example, when the CBI building was built, technology was included in almost all the classrooms. Last year, we were able to replace about half of the projectors, but ten years later—well beyond their expected life span—we are still using some of those original projectors. *(continued on page 4)*

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Another challenge is the ever-changing nature of technology itself. What we are beginning to see now are more user-provided devices (or BYOD “bring your own device”), creating an “anytime/anywhere” learning environment. We are also seeing an increase in the use of mobile apps, as well as the ubiquity of social media. Predicting where technology will be tomorrow, and how it will impact teaching and learning, is an ongoing challenge.

ASSESSMENT SHOWCASE



Chemistry

One of the departments mentioned in the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Visiting Team report as illustrating effective use of assessment was the Chemistry Department. Under the leadership of Department Chair Kathy Harter, the department has documented collection of data and its use to improve teaching and learning. When the Board of Trustees asked to get information about what faculty are doing to comply with MSCHE standards, Harter was chosen to show one model for using data.

Harter provided a schematic for the Board that showed the logic used to create the department’s assessment plan. She also explained the intersection of course and program learning outcomes. The Chemistry Department has a long history of using data to improve teaching and learning, and she was able to show how student outcomes have influenced the choice of textbooks, advising, and teaching strategies.

UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Office of Institutional Research started reporting to Academic Affairs on a temporary basis in January 2014. In November 2014, the Office was officially moved to the Academic Affairs unit.

Dr. Dawn Sinnott was appointed Director of the Office of Institutional Research in November 2014.

On November 7th, a team from the College participated in the AACU Conversation on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, which was held at Drexel University. The team included Lorraine Barber, Judy Gay, Guy Generals, Sam Hirsch, Lisa Johnson, Jason Mays, and John Moore.

On November 9th, Joan Bush presented a paper, “The Persistence of Black Women in Engineering: A Phenomenological Study” at the League for Innovation [STEMtech](#) conference in Denver.

The 14 Pennsylvania community colleges received funding in the second round of TAACCCT grants to create a portal for prior learning assessment. Montgomery County Community College is the lead institution. Sue Hauck is the College representative for this initiative. The portal, *College Credit/Fast Track*, has a soft “go live” in December and a hard “go live” in January.

Educational Support Services is piloting a new initiative, *Fast Track*, in Spring 2015 to increase student success. *Fast Track* is modeled after the [CUNY ASAP program](#). A cohort of students will attend full time and receive incentives and supports in exchange for academic commitments.

Please submit ideas for the newsletter to James Stewart (jstewart@ccp.edu) in the Office of Academic Affairs. The next issue of *Academically Speaking* will focus on General Education/Core Competencies.