Mariciopa Community Colleges
League for Innovation in the Community College
2006-2007 Innovation Awards Program

Innovation of the Year Nomination

Glendale Community College's

Customized Technology Renewal Strategy

INNOVATION UPDATES:
In February 2006, The Arizona Republic reported about the operational benefits and significant cost savings created by the Customized Technology Renewal Strategy program. Referred to as Glendale Community College's "computer-build program", the article recognized additional employees that make the program successful.

In March of 2006, KC Hundere and George Martinez accepted an invitation to present the program to attendees of the TechEd Conference in Pasadena, California. TechEd is the world's leading K-20 Technology in Education Conference and Exposition with over 250 concurrent sessions focusing on issues related to Technology in the Learning Environment including eLearning, Accessibility, IT Security, Plagiarism, & Creative Funding Strategies. Also featured are over 200 leading technology exhibits showcasing real-world solutions to critical issues facing the Education Community.

Continuing to refine the computer build program, OIT has started to employ student workers to do much of the actual construction.   Initial builds for fall of 2006 were very successful. This resulted in further cost savings, and opened an avenue of discussion with departments that teach computer repair to integrate classroom instruction with practical experience working in the Office of Information Technology.

INNOVATION NOMINATED BY:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
This innovation addresses academic institutions' need to manage obsolescence in technology by proactively applying principles of good stewardship. This innovation is built upon replicable processes that dramatically can extend the lifespan of computers, maximize budget dollars, and establish best practices for technology departments, while enhancing equity among users.

INNOVATION CREATORS:
The **Glendale College Information Services (GCIS) Team** is comprised of four technology departments that function together through a collaborative partnership. The mission of the GCIS Team is to constantly improve and enrich technology for students and employees at Glendale Community College. The GCIS Team consists of the following departments and leadership:

KC Hundere, Director Office of Information Technology
Jim Daugherty, Director Innovation Center
Debbie Krumtinger, Director Training & Employee Development
Sue Murry, Director Instructional Computing

INNOVATION CRITERIA DESCRIPTION:

This innovation clearly meets all eight criteria set forth for the Innovation of the Year Awards Program. The GCIS Team is proud to share them with the awards committee.

1. Collaboration - *Value Excellence*

As an evolution of processes – some as many as 10 years old - the GCIS Team designed, developed and implemented the Computer Build Project and Workstation Upgrade Process (WUP) in 2002 with each department contributing from their area of expertise. They continue to work as a cohesive team to support and sustain this innovation as a part of their best practices and standard operating procedures.

2. Creativity – *Value Excellence*
3. Quality - *Value Education*
4. Cost Effectiveness – *Value Responsibility*
5. Efficiency – *Value Responsibility*
6. Timeliness – *Value Excellence*

Information technology groups in colleges and universities face greater pressure than ever to demonstrate accountability, efficiency and bottom-line return on their investment (Burton, 2005). As a result, academic institutions must find creative solutions to technology challenges, customized to unique budget and political contexts. One of the more common and systemic pressures focuses on technology renewal that provides students, faculty and staff with current hardware and software. Glendale Community College has addressed this issue for desktop computing for many years, and has arrived at two integrated, creative, and continually evolving solutions that re-invest technology resources over time, to ensure that users benefit from frequent upgrades.

The point of integration converges where the first solution, called the Computer Build Project, initiated in 2005, internally generates a product that feeds into the second solution, called the Workstation Upgrade Process (WUP). Through a competitive bid process, computer parts are acquired and assembled in-house by trained technicians, who take great pride in their creations and have a level of understanding for these machines far beyond a purchased workstation. During this intensive preparation period, central processing units (CPUs) have current software images installed and are then placed into a rotation cycle for either administrative or academic use through the Workstation Upgrade Process.

The Employee Workstation Upgrade Process (EWUP) provides computers, ancillaries, software, and training to new employees and upgrades to others. As an outgrowth of a project started in 1996 for employee desktop replacement, the EWUP provides approximately one-fourth of all 600 employees with an upgrade or new computer each year. Specifically, some GCC employees get new workstations as often as every 24 months, others stretch the usefulness of their workstations by adding memory over time, and still others receive workstations through the in-house refurbishment process. The ability to sustain the EWUP's generous benefits stems from a single philosophy: in a consultative process with each user, the college provides the exact new computer components essential to performing the tasks at hand, thereby customizing each unit to an employee's need for maximum performance and efficiency.

This multi-step, multi-tiered approach to computer renewal also includes a training component, closely aligning an employee's need for appropriate tools with a very personal way of continually upgrading their knowledge and skills. Through consultation and evaluation, training courses are recommended, or in many cases one-on-one sessions are conducted to deliver precisely the skills needed. Significantly, the EWUP provides a platform for important intangibles: measuring IT service quality, and educating users about the nature of technology renewal (Fleit, 1994). Funding has been simplified to a single, annual budget item that is endorsed by the institution's technology governance committees through a comprehensive evaluation and expectations process. Thus, in multiple dimensions and at many levels of the organization, the EWUP has proven to be one of GCC's greatest "success stories."

The closely related companion solution to the EWUP is the Academic Workstation Upgrade Process, or AWUP. This Process addresses the specific technology renewal and unique configuration needs of academic workstations in classrooms and labs across the GCC campus. Future plans include building these workstations with the aid of student interns in order to provide students with growth opportunities that maintain a learner-centered focus on the development of academic technology spaces.

Like the EWUP, the AWUP has enjoyed a long-term institutional commitment from GCC and has resulted in substantial cost savings each year. Both the AWUP and EWUP enjoy an exemplary reputation for meeting the needs of the entire college community. GCC has long realized the importance of technology renewal, and both these programs are blessed with the confidence of the organization, having annual standing budget lines as the number one and two capital equipment priorities recommended every year by the college's Capital Request Committee (CRC).

7. Replication – *Value Excellence*
8. Learning – *Value Education*

In addition to conserving parts and equipment through the assembly-line style Computer Build Project, precious budget dollars, normally paid to retailer mark-up, are saved for other technology purchase priorities. More benefits are realized as the computer products flow into the EWUP and AWUP placement processes. These benefits include empowering current employees to determine when to request new systems; simplifying the fulfillment of new employees' computer needs without requiring the hiring department to budget for them; providing built-in re-use and refurbishment of salvageable, solid equipment; and educating employees about the College-wide interdependence of shared technology resources.

The tremendous successes of both the Computer Build Project and the Workstation Upgrade Process are stories that need to be told so that other colleges and universities can benefit from this integrated approach and adapt these powerful ideas to their respective campus realities.

References:

Burton, J. June 2005. The Changing Face of IT Executives. University Business.

Capital Request Committee Recommendation: 2005-06. 2004. Campus Technology Committee, Glendale Community College.

Fleit, L. 1994. Self-Assessment for Campus Information Technology. Association for Managing and Using Information Technology in Higher Education (CAUSE) Professional Paper Series #12. Boulder, CO: CAUSE