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NEWS RELEASE

**HIGH-TECH OHIO LEARNING NETWORK GRANT TO FOSTER
 FACULTY COLLABORATION IN SCIENCE SEQUENCE AT UD**

DAYTON, Ohio — Faculty from four science departments at the University of Dayton work together to teach more than 1,000 students each year in a series of classes geared toward non-science majors. A grant from the Ohio Learning Network is about to make collaboration between them easier and more effective.

The University has received a \$42,425 grant from the program, a new initiative of the Ohio Board of Regents that is charged, in part, with helping colleges and universities enhance their capacity and effectiveness to use technology in instruction and research. The new grant will be matched by funds from the University.

All non-science majors in the College of Arts and Sciences and early childhood and middle school majors in the School of Education and Allied Professions at UD are required to take an integrated natural science sequence of classes. Two tracks are offered — human environment, which emphasizes chemistry and biology, and global environment, which emphasizes geology and biology.

Both tracks begin with a course that covers the basic principles of physical science, taught by the physics faculty. The new grant will be used to pilot technology tools to enhance collaboration among the 10 faculty members who teach the physics classes and accompanying labs. The project may also pilot technology components for students, such as online streaming video demonstrations, for example.

“One of the challenges for faculty members in the science sequence is that courses are vertically integrated,” said J. Michael O’Hare, chair of the physics department at UD. “That

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means that the chemistry faculty member who teaches the second course in the sequence builds on what students have learned in the first course from the physics teacher, and the biology professor of the third course depends on them both, and so on.

"To be able to pop on the Web or use particular software to essentially see what's been covered by other faculty members would give us an efficient way to communicate across departments and sections," he said.

Tools developed for the physics faculty will serve as pilots for tools for the entire integrated natural science sequence faculty. "One of the tools may be a virtual collaborative workspace where faculty members can share ideas," said Ken Graetz, director of the computer technology lab in the University's Ryan C. Harris Learning Teaching Center and assistant professor of psychology. "The idea of the project is to use technology to facilitate dialogue among faculty members, to foster that integration that cuts across departments and disciplines."

The integrated natural science sequence was piloted for two years for education majors and then instituted with its full complement of students in fall 1997. It requires students, depending on their major, to complete 11 or 12 hours of science instruction offered in three three-hour courses and three one-hour labs.

"The sequence is aimed at contextualized, inquiry-based learning," said Mary Jo Vesper, associate dean of arts and sciences and professor of biology. "Students are challenged to discover how science works, how relevant and important it is in today's environment. They use real data to learn scientific thinking and to become knowledgeable and comfortable with science."

The technology tools and methods developed from the grant and matching funds from the University will enhance the experience for faculty, but students will also reap the benefits, Vesper said.

"The ultimate goal of faculty interaction and integration of these courses is student learning."